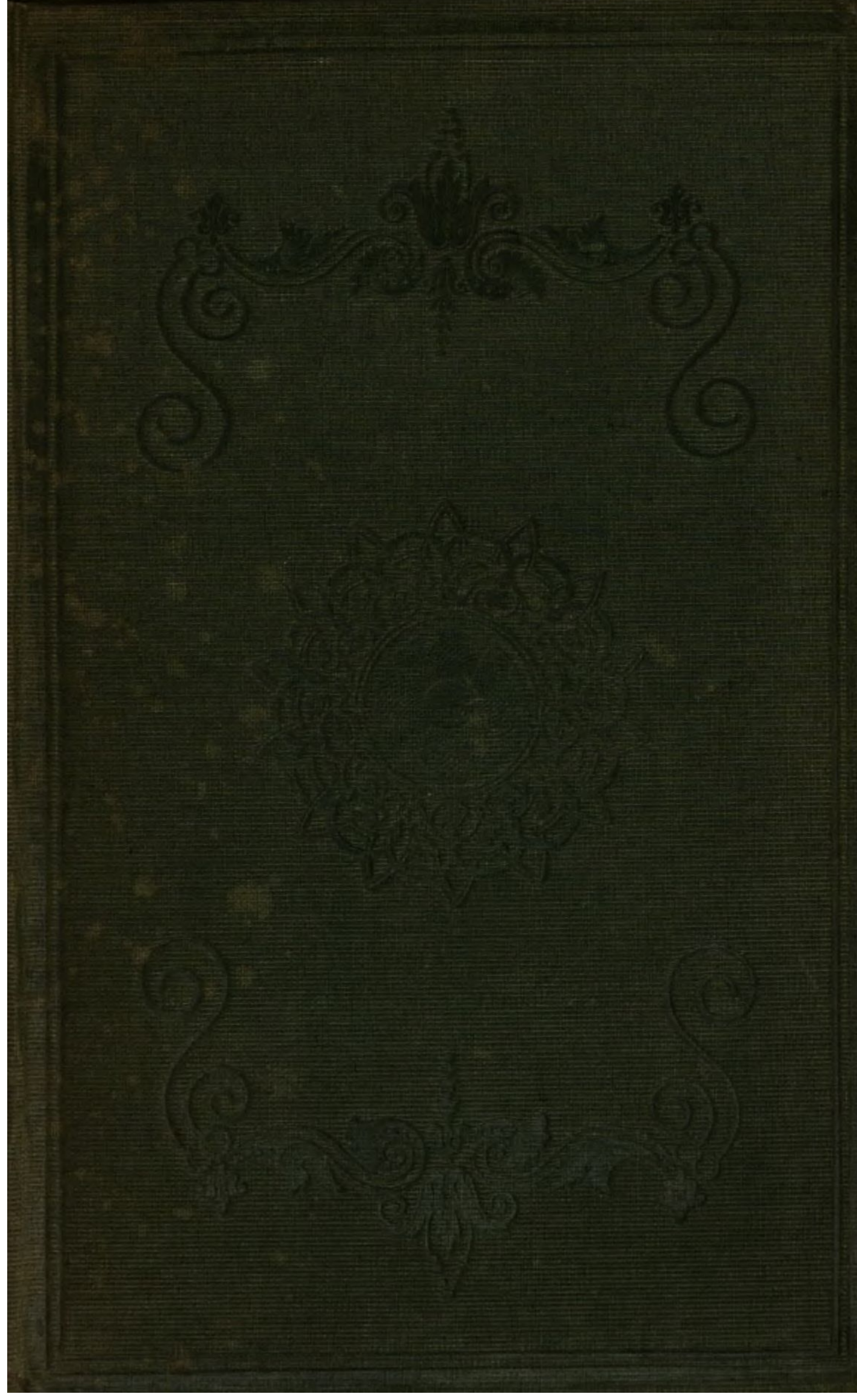




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THE LIFE
OF
KING JAMES THE FIRST.

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BY



Drawn by W. Brown

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FALKLAND PALACE.

THE LIFE
OF
KING JAMES THE FIRST.

BY ROBERT CHAMBERS,

AUTHOR OF "THE HISTORY OF THE REBELLIONS IN SCOTLAND," &c.

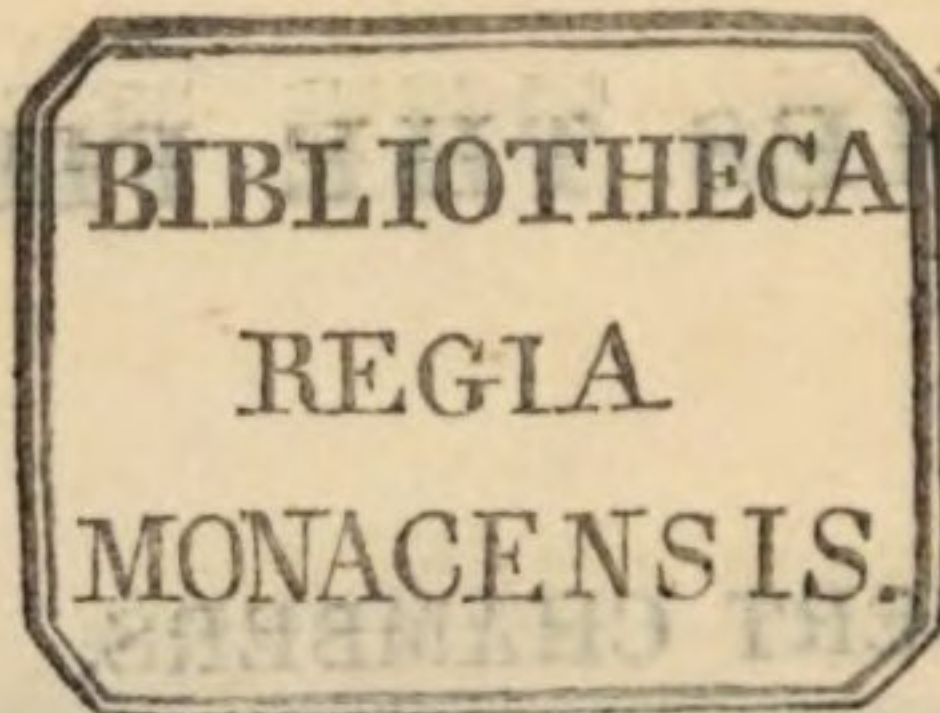
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THE LIFE

OF



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CONTENTS.

CHAP. I.

	Page
James's Ancestry—His Birth and Infancy . . .	13

CHAP. II.

Education—Early youth—Morton's Regency—Ascendency of the favourites Lennox and Arran—Execution of Morton	46
--	----

CHAP. III.

Raid of Ruthven—Arran's Government—Return of the banished Nobles—James's first Literary effort	77
--	----

CHAP. IV.

The King's conduct regarding his Mother at her Execution	110
--	-----

CHAP. V.

James's Marriage—His arrival with the Queen from Denmark—Their reception	135
--	-----

CHAP. VI.

Turbulence of the Earl of Bothwell and the Clergy—Poetical Exercises—Death of the Earl of Moray	158
---	-----

CHAP. VII.

Page

Turbulence of Bothwell and the Clergy continued— Plots of the Catholic Lords—Bothwell restored— And forfeited—Battle of Balrinnies—Death of Chancellor Maitland	188
--	-----

CHAP. VIII.

The Octavians—Tumult of the Seventeenth of De- cember—Publication of the Basilicon Doron . . .	216
---	-----

CHAP. IX.

The Gowry Conspiracy	236
--------------------------------	-----

CHAP. X.

Intrigues preparatory of the Succession—Death of Elizabeth	278
---	-----

PREFACE.

I HAVE little to say in laying this work before the public, except that I have endeavoured to make it as amusing as the nature of the subject might lead the public to expect. Several years ago, the grotesque and familiar character of King James the First seemed to me so likely to suit the style of writing I was most accustomed to practise, that I resolved, as soon as other engagements would permit, to make it the subject of a book. An opportunity having now occurred, I lay my labours before the public; hoping, with the usual earnestness of an author's hope, that my selection of a theme will not be deemed unfortunate.

EDINBURGH, *May* 19, 1830.

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KING JAMES THE FIRST.

CHAPTER I.

JAMES'S ANCESTRY—HIS BIRTH AND INFANCY.

1566—1571.

ALTHOUGH the whole history and character of James the First is peculiar and remarkable, it may perhaps be asserted, that nothing about him is more so than the strange contrast which he presents, in our associations, to his parents, and to the time, place, and other circumstances of his birth. When we consider James by himself, we think of him as of a timid, good-natured, somewhat pedantic, old man ; possessed of some sense and much learning ; who burnt witches, and became the chronicler of their mis-deeds ; who was very weak in the legs, and much given to leaning on the shoulders, and twitching the cheeks, of young gentlemen ; who was at first King of the poor but ancient kingdom of Scotland, and after-

wards, by a fortunate chance, sovereign of all the three realms forming the British empire; who was very foolish, but very fortunate; liked hunting and the Church of England; was much afraid of assassination, as he had too much need, and never could bear to see a drawn sword or a cocked pistol; who was, altogether, a droll, bustling, fidgeting, incomprehensible old gentleman, more like a schoolmaster than a king, and, ten to one, calculated to wield the ferula with more dignity, and also better effect, than the sceptre. In opposition to this train of ideas, upon the whole so ridiculous, we find that the mother of James was Mary Stuart; that name of tears; that most admirable and hapless woman; that word to conjure up all that a poet can dream of beauty, or a historian quote of misfortune; for whom the highest advantages of birth and person procured but the extreme of misery; who seemed only born for a throne that she might perish on a scaffold. Side by side with this idea, and equally opposed to that of King James, we have Darnley, his boy-father; the tall young knight who rode for a time in gilded armour by Mary's side, alike ready to fondle and protect—who afterwards fell a prey, in his unsuspecting puerility, to a band of full-grown traitors, in whose hands he was as the lily is to the whirlwind. Equally opposed to James himself, are his ancestors; on the one side, the series of chivalric kings who held sway over Scotland from a time antecedent to all authentic history; on the other, the line of the stately Plantagenets, and the warlike Douglasses.* Nor is it less curious to view

* Perhaps a genealogical note may here be necessary. James was descended, by both his parents, from King

the prosperous and this-world tenor of his long fortunate life, and the gay southern scene in which the better part of it was spent, in contrast to the dark and stormy era of his birth, the scene of that event, and the people amidst whom it took place.

James's history properly commences before he entered the world. The well-known incident of Rizzio's death, which took place upwards of three months prior to his birth, as it is supposed to have produced some effect upon both his physical and moral constitution, seems entitled to the first notice in these Memoirs. It is needless, of course, to enter into any detail of the circumstances which

Henry VII. of England, who, being himself the representative of the Lancaster branch of the Plantagenets, and marrying Elizabeth of York, the descendant of the other, united in his children, as it was said, the pretensions of both the *Roses*. Henry's eldest daughter Margaret, was, by James IV. of Scotland, the mother of James V., who in his turn was, through his daughter Mary, the grandfather of James VI. Queen Margaret, by a second marriage to Archibald, Earl of Angus, was the mother of lady Margaret Douglas, who, being married to Matthew, Earl of Lennox, became the mother of Lord Darnley, father to the subject of our Memoir. Darnley and Mary were thus second cousins; and perhaps, but for inheriting the claims of both the children of Queen Margaret, James would never have become King of England; for the children of Margaret Douglas, by virtue of being native English, might have had a preference, by the laws of England, over a Scottish claimant with better hereditary right; a good reason, by the way, for the marriage of Mary and Darnley, though, after it turned out unhappily, it was exclaimed against, as the result of an imprudent attachment. In consequence of the failure of the male issue of Henry VIII., only son of Henry VII., Queen Mary became the heiress presumptive of Elizabeth, his last surviving daughter; and to her, accordingly, as she died without issue, James eventually succeeded.

led to that horrid transaction, or even of the incident itself, since they are already so well known. An allusion to the condition in which Mary was at the time, and the effect which it might be supposed to have upon her and her offspring, is alone necessary in this place. It would appear as one of the most flagrant proofs of the barbarism of even the best class of society in that age, that Darnley (who, it must be remembered, was educated in England) and his associates should have chosen to execute the murder of their victim in the Queen's presence, and while she was in such a peculiar condition. Entering, as it must be well recollected, her small supper-chamber, where she was sitting with Rizzio and one or two other persons, they bent their eyes upon him with a threatening expression, and, on his taking refuge behind his mistress, immediately proceeded to seize him. Mary, at various periods of her life, showed that she possessed an intrepidity of spirit not unworthy of her gallant lineage. But in that terrible scene, when her supper-table was overturned, the lights almost extinguished, and a bended pistol presented to her breast by one ruffian, while another stabbed the man who clung in despair to her person, she gave way to a sensation of alarm, which it appears she did not forget even after the birth of her child. It was her own fear, on that dreadful night, that her child could scarcely survive the agitation into which she had been thrown; and among the invectives which she launched against Lord Ruthven, the chief conspirator, one referred to the evils he might have thus brought upon his country. Fortunately, the misfortune which she apprehended, did not ensue. But it was always supposed,

by the contemporaries of her offspring, that he owed the weakness of his limbs, and his antipathy to the sight of arms, to the agitation into which his mother was thrown on the night of Rizzio's slaughter. *

The dissension consequent upon this event, betwixt Mary and Darnley, was partially stilled at the time when she was about to give birth to her child. On this account, when she retired to Edinburgh Castle, (which she chose to make the scene of her accouchment, in consideration of the security it afforded her), he was admitted to lodge in the same fortress, along with her approved friends, the Earls of Argyle, Atholl, Murray, and Mar. In a palace which she had recently built within that place of strength, and which still exhibits the initials of her own and her

* It was latterly insinuated against James, by the less prominent claimants of the English throne, that he was the child of Rizzio, and not of Darnley; a scandal to which some events of his mother's life, and the view which one party took of her character, gave a certain degree of countenance. So lately as the time of the Commonwealth, an enemy of the royal family ingeniously remarked, in allusion to his nickname of "the British Solomon," that he eminently deserved that title, seeing he was the son of *David the Fiddler*, and the father of Rehoboam (meaning *Charles*), who had the kingdom rent from him. But that Mary was guilty with a man described to have been so old and unamiable as Rizzio, is what no historian, save the malignant Buchanan, has ever imputed to her. Nor does chronology allow of such a supposition:—The marriage of the royal pair took place less than eleven months before the birth of their offspring; and it is quite inconceivable that the Queen could have commenced a guilty connection, so soon after her union to a man whom she warmly loved, and with whom, indeed, she had no quarrel till after she was far advanced in pregnancy.

husband's names, mingled in the loving shape of a cipher over the door-way, she was delivered of her son, between nine and ten in the morning of Wednesday, the 19th of June 1566. The room where this event took place is so extremely small, that it is yet the wonder of every one who sees it, how it could have afforded the proper accommodation. Indeed, there never perhaps was a King, even among those who have risen to their thrones from a plebeian rank, who was born in an apartment so limited in dimension, and so humble in appearance, as that in which the first monarch of Great Britain was ushered into the world. It measures no more than the length of two ordinary walking-canes in any direction; and it is somewhat irregular in shape. That Mary should have selected so narrow a room for her retirement under such circumstances, certainly gives a *curious* view either of her character, or of the manners of the age and country in which she lived. *

About two o'clock that afternoon, Lord Darnley came to visit the Queen, and expressed a desire to see the child. "My lord," said Mary, as her attendants presented their precious charge to his arms, "God has given you and me a son." Darnley stooped and kissed the child,

* Yet it is not perhaps so strange as that she should have permitted the guns of the castle, within a few yards of her bed, to be fired off immediately after the birth. They were fired as a matter of course, for the purpose of announcing the event to her subjects in the city below, and as a token of public congratulation. During the evening, bon-fires were lighted on the neighbouring hills; and as the intelligence spread throughout the country, it was received everywhere with similar testimonials of the popular satisfaction.

a blush mantling on his cheek, as the novel idea of paternity rushed to his mind. Mary then took her son into her arms, and, withdrawing a cloth which partially covered his face, said to her husband, "My lord, here I protest to God, and as I shall answer to him at the great day of judgment, this is your son, and no other man's son. He is indeed so much your son, that I only fear it will be the worse for him hereafter." Then turning to Sir William Stanley, Darnley's principal English servant, Mary added, "This is the son who, I hope, shall first unite the two kingdoms of Scotland and England." Sir William answered, "Why, madam ! shall he succeed before your Majesty and his father ?" "Alas !" Mary only answered, and the answer was expressive enough ; "his father has broken to me." Darnley, who still stood near, heard this with pain. "Sweet madam !" said he, "is this your promise that you made, to forget and forgive all ?"—"I have forgiven all," said the Queen ; "but will never forget. What if Fawdonside's pistol had had shot ? What would have become of him and me both ! And what estate would you have been in ? God only knows. But *we* may suspect." * "Madam," answered Darnley, "these things are all past." "Then," said the Queen, "let them go." †

* The Queen here alluded to the conduct of Andrew Ker of Faldownside at the death of Rizzio. He had presented a cocked pistol at her breast ; and it is also recorded of him, that he separated Rizzio from her, by bending back his mid-finger, till he could no longer hold her waist for pain.

† This curious anecdote is from an abridgement of a history of his own times, written by Lord Herries. The

Darnley would almost appear, from the circumstances of this interview, to have been a man of gentler and more tractable spirit, than is generally supposed of him. The blush which came upon his cheek as his child was presented to him, the kiss he imprinted on its lips, and his soft answer to the Queen's irritating remark regarding Rizzio's murder, are all traits of an amiable nature. Perhaps the following anecdote of him, now printed, like the preceding, for the first time, will deepen the favourable impression we thus receive of his character.

Darnley had an uncle in Clydesdale,—George Douglas of Todsholes, otherwise called ‘ of Parkhead ’—a personage noted in Scottish history for having inflicted the first wound upon Rizzio, and who was generally known by the epithet of the Postulate of Aberbrothwick, from his having a prospect of eventually enjoying the temporalities of that rich abbacy. Though this man was only a natural son of the Earl of Angus, father to Darnley's mother, Darnley always styled him “ Uncle ; ” and the royal pair occasionally visited him at Todsholes. One day, about the time when the quarrels of Mary and her husband first became publicly observed, Darnley was fishing on a lake near Todsholes, there being no other individual in the boat but Rizzio. Douglas had perceived, or been informed, that the Italian was the sole cause of his nephew's troubles ; and, with that fatal disposition common to all Scotsmen at the time, by which the interests of a kinsman were held

original is in the Scots College of Douay, and the abridgement in the Advocates' Library, Edinburgh.

superior to all other considerations, he made a sign to Darnley for permission to throw the Secretary into the water, where, in all probability, he would have instantly perished. Darnley, however, would not allow the Postulate to make this sacrifice of life for his sake, however little the risk of detection. No doubt, he was afterwards provoked, not only to consent to the murder of Rizzio, but also to take a part in it. Yet it is certainly so much in his favour, that, at a period a little earlier, he shrunk from sanctioning such a crime, although it might have then been committed much more conveniently, and without the least share of that risk of disagreeable consequences which eventually attended it. *

On the day after James's birth, the inhabitants, clergy, and nobility of Edinburgh, met in St Giles's, the principal church of the city, and returned thanks to the Almighty, for blessing them with an heir-apparent to the crown. The General Assembly of the church at the same time met, and agreed upon sending a message to the Queen, congratulating her upon her delivery, and requesting her to permit her offspring to be baptized and brought up in the Protestant faith. The person chosen to carry this message was Spottiswoode, the Superintendant of Lothian, a venerable churchman, the father of John Spottiswoode, the distinguished Archbishop of St Andrews. When Spottiswoode expressed the wishes of his brethren re-

* From a MS. memoir of the family of Dalgleish, which has been placed in my hands by Captain Stoddart, R. N. Bellvue Crescent, Edinburgh. It appears to have been written by a member of the family about the beginning of the last century.

garding the education of the prince, Mary smiled, and was silent. She otherwise received the ecclesiastical visitor very graciously. She commanded the child to be brought into her room, and shown to the churchman. He took the precious infant in his arms, and, falling upon his knees, uttered an earnest prayer, appropriate to the occasion; to which Mary listened with respectful attention. When done, he good humouredly asked the child to say Amen, as an expression of assent to what had been said; and it is reported that the child did utter a murmur, which Spottiswoode interpreted into the sound of the word required. Mary, amused at the pious warmth of the old man, conferred upon him the nickname of "Master Amen," which James, in his after years, is said to have continued to him, honouring him at the same time with a very friendly regard. *

* Spottiswoode's Church History. We are so much accustomed to associate the idea of Mary with that of grief, that the slightest anecdote of a facetious character, which can now be recorded respecting her, is apt to be appreciated above its deserts. From this conviction, rather than any thing else, I venture to present the following to the reader for the first time.

There is preserved in the Advocates' Library at Edinburgh, a manuscript entitled 'Rolment of Courts,' being an account of the laws, constitution, and antiquities of Scotland; the author of which, Habakkuk Bisset, is stated, by a note on the first leaf, (written in a different hand,) to have been endowed with his Christian name by Queen Mary. The father of Habakkuk was caterer to that Princess, and took the liberty, when on the way to have his child baptized, to ask her Majesty to assign a name for him. She being then about to go to mass, said she would open the Bible when in the church, and the first name which should strike her eye, she would assign it for a designation to the child. The first name she cast up was that of

Among the preparations which Mary had made for her accouchment, there was one of a very important nature. She had engaged her interim secretary, Mr James Melville, (afterwards Sir James) to be ready at a moment's notice to mount his horse and carry the tidings of her delivery to the Queen of England. She was now on friendly terms with Elizabeth ; and as her prospects of succeeding to that sovereign were at the time keenly agitated by the friends of both, and had recently been a subject of correspondence between the parties themselves, she naturally felt anxious to communicate the earliest information regarding the event to the English Court. For this purpose, she had previously written and signed a letter to Elizabeth, complete in every respect, and ready to be despatched, except in the statement of the child's sex. For some time before, says Sir James Melville in his *Memoirs*, ' I lay within the Castle of Edinburgh, praying night and day for her Majesty's good and happy delivery of a fair son. This prayer being granted, I was the first who was thereof advertised by the Lady Boyne in her Majesty's name, to part with diligence the 19th of June, 1566, between ten and eleven in the morning. By twelve of the clock, I took horse, and was that night at Berwick. The fourth day thereafter I was at London, and did first meet with my brother Sir Robert, who that same night sent and advertised Secretary Cecil of my arrival, and of the birth of the Prince, desiring him to keep it quiet till my coming to court to show it myself un-

the prophet Habakkuk, which was accordingly bestowed upon the future author of the ' Rolment of Courts. '

to her Majesty, who was for the time at Greenwich, where her Majesty was in great mirth dancing after supper. But so soon as the Secretary Cecil whispered in her ear the news of the Prince's birth, all the mirth was laid aside for that night. All present marvelled whence proceeded such a change; for the Queen did sit down, putting her hand under her cheek, bursting out to some of her ladies, that the Queen of Scots was mother of a fair son, while *she* was but a barren stock. The next morning was appointed for me to get audience; at which time my brother and I went by water to Greenwich, and were met by some friends, who told us how sorrowful her Majesty was at my news; but that she had been advised to show a glad and cheerful countenance; which she did in her best apparel, saying, that the joyful news of the Queen her sister's delivery of a fair son, which I had sent her by Secretary Cecil, had recovered her out of a heavy sickness which she had been under for fifteen days. Therefore, she welcomed me with a merry volt, and thanked me for the diligence I had used in hasting to give her that welcome intelligence. All this she had said before I delivered to her my letter of credence. After that she had read it, I declared how that the Queen had hasted me towards her Majesty, as one whom she knew, of all her friends, would be most joyful of the glad news of her delivery, albeit dear bought with the peril of her life, she being so sore handled that she wished she had never been married. This I said by the way, to give her a little scare from marriage; for so my brother had counselled me, because sometimes she boasted [threatened] to marry the Archduke

Charles of Austria, when any man pressed her to name a second person. Then I requested her Majesty to be a gossip to the Queen, to which she gladly condescended. Your Majesty, said I, will now have a fair occasion to see the Queen, whereof I have heard your Majesty so oft desirous. Whereat she smiled, saying, She wished that her estate and affairs might permit her; in the meantime, she promised to send both honourable lords and ladies to supply her room.'

The great mind of Elizabeth is here found pinning at her own hopelessness of issue, and bitterly grudging the advantage which the Queen of Scots derived from her infant heir as a claimant of the English throne. She had previously found great difficulty in repressing the claims of Mary to be declared her heir, urged as these claims were by a large party of her subjects; and she now contemplated with much vexation the strong additional claim which the Scottish Queen must thus have upon the affections of the English people.

Mary remained in Edinburgh Castle, with her son, till the beginning of August, when she took shipping at Newhaven, and sailed up the Firth of Forth to Alloa, the seat of her trusty friend the Earl of Mar. Here she lived for a week or more, during which Monsieur Malvoisin came to her, as ambassador from the King of France, to congratulate her on the birth of her son; an event which had given that monarch the greatest joy, as well as all the other Catholic sovereigns of Europe, tending as it did to fortify her pretensions to the English crown against Elizabeth. Malvoisin exerted himself at Alloa to reconcile her to Lord Darnley, and was so successful in his efforts, as

to induce them to spend two nights together. From Alloa, the whole court proceeded to Meggat in Tweeddale, to enjoy the recreation of hunting; on which expedition Darnley accompanied the Queen, along with Bothwell, Murray, and others, who had offended her Majesty by their concern in Rizzio's murder, but to whom, as to Darnley, she had recently been in a great measure reconciled.

Knox and Buchanan, whom religious prejudices induced to become the enemies and calumniators of this ill-starred princess, represent her conduct at this time as flagitious to the last degree. In particular, the latter writer accuses her of having already commenced a criminal correspondence with the Earl of Bothwell. It is not the province of the present writer to become the defender of Mary Stuart; although he believes that much might yet be done to erase the impressions which those able but unjust men have made upon the public mind regarding her conduct. It may be proper, however, for the respectability of the subject of this memoir, to remind the reader, that the whole of the scandals which Buchanan has detailed in regard to this particular era of her life, are disproved by State documents, disclosed only to the present generation. * The celebrated story, for instance, of her journey to visit Bothwell at the Hermitage Castle, upon which Buchanan lays so much stress, is now found to have been a very simple diplomatic transaction, and to have occurred quite as a matter of course in public business.

The baptism of the young prince took place at

* In the elaborate and valuable work of Mr George Chalmers.

Stirling, on the 17th of December, in a style of parade and magnificence, rather suited to the importance of the infant as heir-presumptive to the crown of England, than to his character as the son of the Queen of Scots. Mary had, at the very first, requested Queen Elizabeth to stand as sponsor or gossip; and she had at the same time taken care to invite ambassadors from all the friendly powers abroad to be present at the ceremony. Before the appointed day, the Earl of Bedford arrived, with a retinue of eighty gentlemen on horseback, as ambassador from Elizabeth, bringing with him a font of gold to be employed in the ceremony, as a present from his mistress to Queen Mary. The accurate Stowe informs us, that this grand piece of plate cost the sum of one thousand and forty-three pounds nineteen shillings; while a more homely Scottish chronicler of the day has recorded, that it was 'twa stane wecht.'* Large as it was, however, Elizabeth entertained apprehensions that it would be too small to contain the person of the infant prince; and she had given Bedford instructions, among graver matters, 'to say pleasantly that it was made as soon as we heard of the Prince's birth, and then 'twas big enough for him; but now he, being grown, is too big for it; therefore it may be better used for the *next child*, provided it be christened before it outgrows the font.'† The Earl also brought a ring, 'estimate worth ane hundredth merks,' to be presented to the Countess of Argyle, Mary's natural sister, and a Catholic,

* Johnston's History of Scotland, M.S., Advocates' Library.

† Instructions, apud Keith's History, p. 356, 357.

whom Elizabeth had appointed to represent her as gossip at the baptism.* Nearly about the same time arrived the Count de Brienne, as ambassador from the King of France. Mary also expected an envoy from the Duke of Savoy; but, though she postponed the ceremony for two days, to allow him time to come forward, he arrived too late.†

The older historians, ever more attentive to the trappings of history than to its *morale*, have supplied us with a most minute account of the baptism; part of which, as in some measure illustrative of the manners, and also the politics of the time, may here be presented anew. The prince, in the first place, was borne out of the chamber he occupied in Stirling Castle, to the adjacent royal chapel, by the French ambassador, the Countess of Argyle, and Monsieur Le Croc, (a French resident, who acted on this occasion in place of the lagging deputy of the Duke of Savoy). After these proceeded the Earl of Atholl, bearing 'ane gret serge of war,' the Earl of Eglintoune bearing 'the salt-fat,' Lord Sempill bearing 'the cude,' and Lord Ross 'the basin and ewer,' which were to be employed in the ceremony.‡ A multitude of nobles and gentlemen followed, each bearing in his hand a 'large pricket of wax;' the time requiring such illumination, as it was at five in the after-

* Johnston's MS. History.

† It may be interesting to local antiquaries to know, that the English ambassador, on his arrival at Edinburgh, lodged in the Duke of Chatelerauld's house, in the Kirk of Field Wynd, where the College now stands; and that the French ambassador was bestowed in 'Henry Kinloch's Lodging in the Canongate.'—*Johnston's MS. History.*

‡ Johnston's MS. History.

noon that the solemnity commenced. At the entry of the chapel, all who had scruples of conscience on account of the Catholic nature of the ceremony, withdrew from the procession; among which number were the English ambassador and his train, who had orders to that effect from their mistress. A much more important person than these failed to countenance the baptism with his presence. This was Darnley. The dissensions between him and the Queen having now broken out again as violently as ever, he was absent, either on account of his own obstinate folly, or in consequence of precautions which Mary had taken to that effect, for the sake of decent appearances. *

The ceremony was performed by John Hamilton, Archbishop of St Andrew's, a prelate whose fate it was, only five years after, to be hanged upon the neighbouring bridge over the Forth, a victim to the fierce party-spirit which then tore the bowels of the nation. On the present occasion, in splendid unconsciousness of his fate, Hamilton appeared in full pontificals, staff, mitre, and crosier, and was assisted by the Bishops of Dunkeld, Dunblane, and Ross, with a multitude of humbler officials, all of them in their appropriate attire. He performed the whole of the ceremonies of the sacrament of baptism, in exact conformity to the custom of the Romish church, except 'the spittle,' which was omitted at the request of the Queen. After the solemnity, the child's name and titles were thrice proclaimed by the heralds, under sound of trumpet: 'Charles James, James Charles,

* He remained, during the time of the ceremony, in the lodging of the Sub-dean of the Chapel Royal, within the town of Stirling.—*Johnston's MS. History.*

Prince and Steward of Scotland, Duke of Rothsay, Earl of Carrick, Lord of the Isles, and Baron of Renfrew.' * The whole ceremony was concluded with 'singing and playing of organs.' †

'This done, they passed to the great hall to the supper, quhereat sat the Queenis grace; at the mid-buird the French ambassadour; at the rycht hand the English ambassadour; at the left hand Monsieur Le Croc. And to the Queenis Majesty the Earl of Huntlie was carver, the Earl of Murray cupper, and the Earl of Bothwell sewer; to the French ambassador, the Earl of Mar carver, the Earl of Cassilis cupper, and the Earl of Athole sewer; to the English ambassador, the Earl of Eglington carver, the Earl of Rothes cupper, and the Earl of Crawford sewer; to the Duke of Savoy's ambassadour (*pro-ambassador*), the Master of Maxwell carver, the Lord Boyd cupper, and the Lord Levingston sewer. The or-dour of the in-bringing of the mess was, the her-aulds, trumpettis, and messengers, with three masters of household, in rank; namely, the Laird of Finlater in the middis, Seignor Francis de Bastian at the rycht hand, and Gilbert Balfour at the left. After them came George Lord Seyton alone; and after him came the Earl of Argyle alone; and ilk ane of them ane fare whyte stalf in his hand. And the rest of the lords, baronis, and gentlemen bure coursses in great abundance, and weill or-dourit. And, after gret dancing and playing, al partit to thair lodgings.' ‡

* Johnston's MS. Hist.

† Keith, 360. The principal name, James, was in honour of the Queen's father, James V. The second was in honour of Charles IX. King of France.

‡ Johnston's MS. Hist.

Such is the report of one simple annalist. 'It is reportit' says another, † 'by persons worthie of credit, that that day the Prince was baptized, there was sitting in the entrie of the Castle, ane puir man asking alms, having a young child on his knee, whose head was so great that the body of the child could scarce bear it up; which, when a gentleman perceived, he could not defend himself from tears, for fear of the evil he judged to be portended.' This affords a curious view of the state of things in Scotland at that time; princely revels within doors, and at the very threshold a scene of poverty and wretchedness appalling to the senses.

Two days after the baptism, the Queen entertained her court and foreign guests at a grand banquet, which was preceded by an exhibition of fireworks in Stirling churchyard. During the banquet, an amusing quarrel arose between the French and English. It appears, that the various representatives of these antagonist nations beheld each other, on the present occasion, with a good deal of their accustomed suspicion and hatred. The French, for one thing, thought the English more favoured by the Queen than was their due, and that they themselves were too little favoured: it appeared to them that her Majesty was disposed to pay less court to her old and assured friends of France, than to her new and less secure allies of England. It so happened, that the amusements of the evening were chiefly conducted by the Queen's French servant, de Bastian; a name disagreeably memorable in her history, as it was on his marriage night

† Calderwood's Church History, MS. Ad. Lib. vol. iii. p. 35.

that Darnley was murdered. According to the grotesque taste of that age, the table containing the meat was moved into the hall by concealed machinery, preceded by a number of men dressed like satyrs, and accompanied by 'musicians, clothed like maids, and playing on all sorts of instruments.' The business of the satyrs was to make way for the advancing table through the guests assembled in the hall. It pleased them, however, to perform an extra-official duty, by seizing their tails behind, and wagging them in the faces of the crowd. 'The long-tailed English' was an epithet of contempt applicable to that nation from the days of King David the Second, when we know it was applied to a party of them by Black Agnes, at the siege of Dunbar. Of course, it was natural for them, on the present occasion, to conceive that the ludicrous gesture of the satyrs was a studied insult devised against them by the French master of ceremonies; and under this impression, the greater part of them were foolish enough to express their resentment, by sitting down upon the floor behind the table, with their backs turned to the festive scene. Mr Hatton, one of the principal men among them, even went the length of telling Sir James Melville, that, but for the Queen's presence, he would have "put his dagger into the heart of that knave De Bastian." Mary, who was sitting at the time in conversation with the Earl of Bedford, turned about on hearing the tumult; but it cost both her and the Earl a good deal of pains to reassure the English, and compose the mighty quarrel which distracted the assemblage. *

* Sir James Melvill's Memoirs, 151.

Having soon after this dismissed the foreign ambassadors, Mary remained with her son at Stirling till the 13th of January, when she removed with him to Edinburgh. Darnley had in the meantime gone, in a very discontented state of mind, to visit his father in Glasgow, where the small-pox was then raging. This unhappy young man—for unhappy he may well be called, though unfortunate in nothing but his mental imbecility—caught the contagion immediately after his arrival at Glasgow. The Queen no sooner heard of his illness, than she sent her physician to attend him. Towards the end of the month, she went herself to visit him at Glasgow; his extreme distress having once more induced her to forgive him. It was then determined that he should be brought to Edinburgh, for change of air, and thither he was accordingly conveyed in a chariot or litter, about the end of January. Having been placed in the house of the Provost of the collegiate church of St Mary in the Fields, which was properly fitted up for his reception, he lay in a convalescent state, attended with due care by Mary, till the 10th of February, when, in consequence of a conspiracy entered into for that effect, by the Earl of Murray, the Secretary Maitland, and other flagitious men, he was assassinated in a manner too well known to require particular description here.

George Buchanan, who belonged to the party of the conspirators, has relieved them of the whole blame of this infamous transaction, and thrown it upon the Queen. His tale is a plausible one; and as it appeared in a work which continued, for two centuries, to be the most popular history of the country, and which appeals, moreover, to the

religious prejudices of the people, it has taken deep root in the public mind. Unfortunately, however, for his reputation, and that of his friends, the whole story has been lately proved, by reference to original and unerring documents, to have been not only untrue, but impossible. The explanation of the mystery of Darnley's murder, is, that it was projected by the men whose names are mentioned in the last paragraph, and executed by their instrument the Earl of Bothwell. Mary, throughout all the subsequent transactions of her life, was the victim of these men, and of one other grand leader of the Protestant interest, Elizabeth Queen of England.

The murder of Darnley was but a part of the conspiracy which had been formed against the Queen. The chief part was what came afterwards, her abduction by Bothwell, and the infamy which they contrived to throw upon her on that account. In one word, it was calculated by these designing men, that, if she could be prevailed upon to marry the supposed murderer of her husband, the popular odium would be so strong against her, that there would then be little difficulty in transferring the government into their own hands. The whole plot was developed exactly in the manner which had been concluded on.

About the 20th of March, when James was nine months old, he was transferred back from Edinburgh to Stirling Castle, and there placed for his education under the tutelage of John Earl of Mar, a nobleman in whose family the custody of the infants of the royal family had almost become hereditary. Mary saw him there *for the last time* on the 23d of April. In returning, next day, from

Stirling Castle towards Edinburgh, she was seized by Bothwell at Cramond Bridge, and hurried off to his impregnable fortress of Dunbar. On the 15th of May, she was induced, partly by the solicitations of Bothwell, partly by the recommendation of the members of the conspiracy, and partly by a wish to repair her character as a matron, to marry this infamous nobleman; of whose concern in the assassination of her husband, be it remarked, she was in all probability ignorant, or at least incredulous; for, at that time, it was only suspected by the people that he was guilty, and, of all persons in the realm, she was the least likely to be acquainted with the popular rumours. The marriage had scarcely been transacted three days, when, in prosecution of the conspiracy, her enemies assembled with their vassals, and made a hostile movement against her. She was now completely in their toils. Having gathered a considerable force at Dunbar, she moved forward on the 15th of June to Carbery, near Musselburgh, where the conspirators met her with nearly an equal force. The two armies lay opposite to each other during the whole of a long summer day, while a proposal was agitated by both to settle the matter in dispute, by a single combat betwixt Bothwell and some champion among the conspirators. At length, as evening declined, Mary was induced, by the clemency of her disposition, and the fair professions of her enemies, to commit her person into their custody, while Bothwell retired to Dunbar, and her army was dissolved.

In making this resignation of her person, it is evident that the unfortunate Queen supposed herself only changing the protection of Bothwell for

that of another party ; which was quite a natural and proper transaction in an age when royalty could only be upheld by an association of nobles, or by one leading man among them. Though the promises of the rebels were to this effect, their intentions were in reality very different. They had no sooner got the Queen into their hands, than they began to treat her as a captive criminal. Favoured in their base designs by the prejudices of the populace, they led her to Edinburgh with every circumstance of degradation. The crowd which collected in the streets as she passed through them, was so great, that she and her guards could only move one after another in a string ; and thus she was closely environed by a rude mob, who assailed her with a thousand varied insults. One of the plans taken by the party to inflame the people against her, was the exhibition of a standard, containing a view of Darnley's body, lying under a tree, with the infant prince on his knees, uttering the words, " Judge and avenge my cause, Oh Lord ! " This was repeatedly presented to her eyes. Horror-struck at her situation, the unhappy Queen shed abundance of tears ; and thus, as the day was exceedingly hot and dusty, her face at length became begrimed to such a degree, as to be scarcely recognisable. To increase the ridicule of her appearance, her captors obliged her to go through the procession, without changing the short and miry little riding-habit which she had worn in the fields, for any more dignified garment. They enclosed her for the night, without attendance of any sort, in a small apartment of the house of the provost ; where, next morning, she was seen at a window, using the most violent gestures which ex-

treme grief can suggest, and with no covering to the upper part of her body, but the wild tresses, which, in her distraction, she had permitted to escape from their usual restraint. She spent the whole of the 16th of June in this situation, her ears regaled, during a part of it, with the noise of a skirmish which took place in the street betwixt the retainers of two hostile nobles, and her mind haunted with the most appalling fears regarding her destination. At length, after a confinement of two-and-twenty hours, she was taken forth about eleven o'clock at night, and hurried away to the little islet fortress of Lochleven, where she was put under the charge of Sir Robert Douglas; who, being related to Morton, and connected by marriage with Murray, seemed the most trusty jailor that could be selected.

It is one of the most grievous discounts from royalty, that the relations which give to private life its sweetest grace and best enjoyments, are, in that loftier station, often sacrificed to political calculations. Had Mary been born in a humble sphere of life, her child would have probably been a solace to her above all others; and scarcely any contingency could have occurred to render him a source of misfortune or regret. But in the high place which she was ordained to fill in society, her child was rendered the means of danger and annoyance to her, even before he entered the world; and he no sooner saw the light, and it was proclaimed, as the simple language of scripture expresses it, 'that a man child was born,' than he became unconsciously her most conspicuous enemy. It was an obvious idea, on the part of the no-

bles who deposed Mary, to take her infant under their protection, and make him their nominal sovereign; for not only was he the next heir to the crown, and the person who, at any rate, must have eventually succeeded, but his long minority promised them a duration of their ill-acquired power, and they could calculate upon educating him as they pleased. Accordingly, a month had scarcely elapsed after the incarceration of the Queen, when a deputation of the insurgents appeared before her in her prison, and, by dint of threats, and personal violence, compelled her to sign a deed resigning the sovereignty into the hands of her son. Fortified by this document, they proceeded to Stirling; and, on the 29th of July, when James was only thirteen months and ten days old, he was crowned and proclaimed as King James the Sixth. The Earl of Murray was then absent in France; but he returned, about ten days after the coronation, and was almost immediately appointed to the office of Regent. The character of Murray is well known—righteous and amiable to all who did not interfere with his ambitious views, but, in the prosecution of these, cruel and unprincipled; a man who, if he had not had the good fortune to profess and advance the Protestant faith—or rather, if that had not been his best tactics—for nobody in his senses could suppose such a man sincere—would have been recorded by history as a usurper and a parricide.

In the succeeding May, by the assistance of the brother of her keeper, Mary escaped from Lochleven, and immediately succeeded in raising an army among the numerous vassals of the family of Hamil-

ton ; but unfortunately, engaging in a rash rencontre with the troops of the Earl of Murray, at Langside, near Glasgow, she was defeated, and compelled to take to flight. Seeing no refuge for herself in Scotland, she now adopted the resolution of flying to claim the protection of the Queen of England, which country she entered, for that purpose, within the week of her defeat. Her seizure, her imprisonment, and her eventual destruction by that princess, are facts which need not here be given in detail.

By the restraint imposed upon Mary in England, the Earl of Murray was confirmed in his regency, with no other drawback to his power, than the occasional ebullitions of the Queen's party, and the submission which he was obliged to pay to Elizabeth, who, from the influence she possessed over the Protestant interest in Scotland, might almost be termed his constituent. His government is generally allowed to have been mild and conciliating ; but he happened to give mortal offence to a gentleman of the name of Hamilton, one of the family which formed the principal part of the faction opposed to him. That person, urged by private resentment to undertake a duty which his friends persuaded him to think public, deliberately shot the Regent with a harquebuss, from the window of a house in Linlithgow, January 23, 1569-70, after he had governed little more than two years. The Scottish parliament then selected Matthew Earl of Lennox, the father of Darnley, and grandfather of the infant King, to act as Regent in his place. Lennox was a feeble, though by no means a bad man ; and his accession to an office which it required all the talents and vigour

of Murray to execute properly, was the signal for a renewed attempt in favour of the Queen. Her friends now began a struggle with her enemies, distinguished by a peculiar ferocity, and a total want of all those amenities which in general tend to smooth the aspect of civil war. The Castles of Dumbarton and Edinburgh, besides others belonging to the Hamiltons in Clydesdale, still held out for Mary. Indeed, the capital itself was entirely in the hands of the Queen's party; and to increase her hopes, the castle of that city was now held for her by Kirkaldy of Grange and Maitland of Lethington, two men of the greatest importance, and who had till lately been her enemies. Stirling, the second fortress of the kingdom, naturally became the head-quarters of the King's party, who also, on one occasion, established themselves in the Canongate, one of the fauxbourgs of Edinburgh, and there held a parliament in opposition to one which was assembled in the name of Mary within the city. So keen did this struggle at length become, that both parties began to hang all prisoners who fell into their hands, while the two rival parliaments fulminated attainders against each other, with a regularity of discharge almost equal to that which was exemplified by the guns of the castle, and those of the batteries which assailed it.

The young King, in the mean time, grew up under the care of his faithful and affectionate governor the Earl of Mar, and that of his equally faithful and affectionate nurse the Countess. One anecdote of his infancy has been preserved, with ludicrous care, by the contemporary historians.

The Regent Lennox having called a parliament, therwise a meeting of his own party, at Stirling,

on the 28th of August 1571, the baby King was conducted thither on horseback, in royal robes, to preside over the assembly. It was in the town-house of Stirling that this parliament was held; and the accommodations of the place had probably been better before the commencement of these ruinous troubles. The *regalia* carried before James on this occasion, and placed on the table at which he sat, were of brass over-gilt, because the real symbols of royalty were kept in Edinburgh Castle, which was in the hands of his mother's party. The house, however, was in a condition still less honourable to the character of a Scottish parliament, there being a large hole in its roof. James, who was now five years of age, was struck at once by the multitude of the assemblage around him, and by the breach which he observed over his head; and he asked his governor, what matter it was which he was now engaged in? Being informed that it was the parliament, he remarked, with infantine simplicity, "I think there be ane hole in the parliament." *

There was nothing *but* infantine simplicity in the expression used by the young monarch. Yet the events of the subsequent week were such as to elevate it, in the estimation of the country, into something like a prophecy. Before that brief space had elapsed, a real and very grievous breach was made in the public body over which the King had presided. It was in manner as follows:—

* By another version of the story, the hole was not in the roof of the hall, but in the 'cloth of estate' which covered the table; and James made the remark, as he reached forth his hand to manipulate the edges of the torn drape-ry.

Kirkaldy, the governor of Edinburgh Castle, being informed that the King's friends at Stirling lay in such security as not even to keep a watch, projected an enterprise, by which he hoped to give them a complete surprise. On the evening of the 2nd of September, having seized all the horses which appeared that day in the Edinburgh market, he mounted two hundred of his best soldiers; to which number adding three hundred of his best foot, he placed the whole under the direction of Captain George Bell, a native of Stirling, who undertook, from his local knowledge, to lead them to their prey. The men were chiefly Borderers, under the command of the Laird of Buccleuch; and, to preserve the secret, it was given out that the enterprise was destined for Jedburgh, to compose some differences which had lately sprung up betwixt the citizens of that town and their powerful neighbour, the Laird of Ferniehirst. They left Edinburgh at night-fall, by the way towards Jedburgh; but as soon as they got to a little distance, they turned abruptly to the west, and marched with the utmost haste to Stirling. The foot were mounted behind the cavalry for the greater expedition; while such as could not be thus accommodated, seized horses for themselves from the country people as they marched along. Bell led them into the silent streets of Stirling, a little after midnight, not so much as a dog barking at them as they passed. He immediately proceeded to denote to his followers the houses occupied by individuals of distinction; and, a guard being placed upon each, the whole were simultaneously attacked. They had previously agitated among themselves the propriety of killing all the men of rank with-

out exception; but although Lord Claud Hamilton, brother to the late Archbishop of St Andrews, advocated this unsparing measure, as a proper tribute to the manes of his kinsman, it was finally settled, that as many as possible should be taken prisoners, and brought away alive. The attack took place to the cry of, "Think on the Archbishop of St Andrews;" and in a few minutes, almost every man of name in the town was seized, brought out, mounted behind a trooper, and made ready to march to Edinburgh. Lennox attempted to defend himself; but, the assailants pretending that they had placed some barrels of gunpowder beneath his lodging, which they threatened to blow up, he was persuaded to yield, on a promise of his life. Morton alone stood out; and his obstinacy became the salvation of his party. The assailants were now only waiting for his surrender, before they should leave the town. Every other enemy was in custody; every horse was brought out of the stables by the Borderers: these redoubted heroes had even got a considerable quantity of valuable moveables out of the merchants' shops, which they were determined to carry away, as their own most natural share of the profits of the enterprise; when a little accident proved the ruin of the whole 'raid,' hitherto so well conducted, and so completely successful. There was a large house, belonging to the Earl of Mar, which commanded the whole length of the principal street, and upon which they had neglected to place a guard, for the simple reason that it was uninhabited, and indeed only in the process of building. Into this edifice Mar led a party of sixteen of his own soldiers, whom he had brought down from

the castle, on learning what was going on in the town. They having fired one effective volley from their *harquebusses of found*, the invading party was completely counter-surprised, and at once thrown into the utmost confusion. Without waiting a moment to ascertain the strength of the rescuing party, they thronged pell-mell out at the narrow passage which leads from the principal street, where many were overwhelmed in the press, and trodden to death under foot. Mar's party, pouring one by one from a narrow door-way of the unfinished building, now attacked them in rear, and were soon joined by others, who escaped from their captors. A considerable number of the leading men among the Queen's party surrendered at discretion to the very persons who had been committed to their charge, and mounted behind them as prisoners, but a few minutes before. In the midst of the confusion, a wretch of the name of Calder deliberately shot the Regent with his pistol, from a wish to make the enterprise not altogether ineffectual; and David Spens of Ormiston, who had the custody of this important personage, was at the same time struck down by one of his own party, for attempting to defend his charge. The Queen's faction at last evacuated the town, with the loss of thirty-eight men; but it is calculated that they would have suffered much more, if the Borderers had left any horses to the enemy, on which to continue the pursuit.

The unfortunate Regent was carried to Stirling Castle in a dying state, remarking, as he went, that "all was well, if *the babe* was well;" by which he meant the King. He made a pious end next day, recommending the young sovereign to

Almighty protection, and desiring those who were about him to bear his love "to his wife Meg;" for by that familiar name he always designated the grand-daughter of Henry VII., and grandmother of King James VI.

This singular enterprise caused the common people to designate the parliament during which it took place, "the Black Parliament;" as also to interpret the childish observation of the King regarding the ceiling of the Parliament house, into a prophecy.

CHAPTER II.

EDUCATION—EARLY YOUTH—MORTON'S REGENCY—ASCEND-
ENCY OF THE FAVOURITES LENNOX AND ARRAN—EXECUTION
OF MORTON.

1571—1580.

JAMES was unfortunate in all the circumstances of his early years, even in those in which men of all stations are commonly alike fortunate. We learn from Dr Mayerne, his physician in latter life, * that he had a drunkard for a wet nurse, from whose vitiated milk, although weaned within twelve months, he contracted a feeble constitution of body, which rendered him unable to walk till his sixth year—though perhaps this was partly the result, as already stated, of the fright which his mother received before he was born. His whole organization was imperfect and peculiar: he inherited, for instance, from his grandfather James V., and his mother Mary, a certain narrowness of jaws, which rendered swallowing difficult.

Perhaps, however, he was not more unfortunate in any thing than in his preceptor, the celebrated Buchanan. As the greatest scholar of his age, and one who was perfectly eligible in the score of politics and religion, this personage naturally oc-

* Ellis's Letters, 2d ser. iii. 199.

curred to James's guardians, as one every way worthy of becoming his tutor. He was, therefore, called away from his office of Principal of the University of St Andrews, in order to undertake the management of the royal education at Stirling.

If the mere possession of vast classical learning, or a turn for writing elegant Latin, could have qualified any man for assuming this important place, Buchanan was certainly qualified. It may be questioned, however, if he possessed the real requisites of the office. In the very first place, his age, advanced towards seventy, was a serious disqualification, allied as it was to the still more serious ones of a broken temper—the natural result of a long life of literary hardship and disappointment—and the peculiar habits which must always more or less characterize solitary old age. Besides, the mere possession of learning does not imply the faculty of teaching; and Buchanan had all his life been a learner, not a teacher. His republican principles, and the sincere hatred which he entertained for kings, although qualities that would appear excellent to his constituents and to a large modern party, surely did not add to his powers of commanding the affections, and fixing the attention of a princely pupil. Nor was he the better qualified for taking this endearing place in relation to the son, that he was already the enemy, and designed to become the maligner, of the mother. There was, to say the least of it, a great deal of bad taste displayed by the regency, in fixing upon the friend of the Earl of Murray for the preceptor of the son of Mary. A less learned and younger man, one of more gentle temper, and neutral in regard to the late troubles, would surely,

if otherwise qualified for the office, have been better than this ungracious anchorite, whose only recommendation, after all, in the eyes of his constituents, was, that he was essentially their own creature.

Buchanan, however, was not single in his charge. He was only at the head of other three instructors, Mr Peter Young, and the titular Abbots of Cambuskenneth and Dryburgh, both of which last were Erskines, of the family of Mar. These men are stated, by various writers friendly to Buchanan, to have formed a mean contrast, in their courtly and gentle treatment of their pupil, to the stern demeanour of their superior. But this assertion is only of a piece with the general blindness of would-be reformers, whose besetting fault it is to theorise on high principles, without allowing for the deficiencies of the materials on which they have to work. James was a child, and not a man; and as it was to be supposed that he possessed the same passions, and was characterised by the same imperfections as most boys, it was necessary to employ expedients of the most practical kind. To teach children, one must himself 'become as a little child.' The mere exhibition of knowledge before the eyes of young people, will not make them learn. The simple statement of rules will fail to impress them. They must be reasoned with. Their faculties, such as they are, must be interested. Knowledge must be presented to them, not in masses, nor in its primitive shape; it must be rendered a pulp, and administered in mouthfuls. Above all, it must not be presented with such a frown as to make them fear it to be poison, instead of salutary diet. Now, the true difference between Buchanan and

his associates was, that the former rendered his instructions unpalatable, at once by the rigour of discipline which accompanied them, and his failing to reduce them into a sufficiently practical shape ; while the others, with less distinction in learning, but more common sense, accommodated themselves and their knowledge to the character of their pupil, and, perhaps showing him less, communicated more. James himself seems to have long remembered Buchanan with a feeling of horror. He used to say of one of his English courtiers, in the latter part of his life, that he never could help trembling at his approach, he brought him so much in mind of his "pedagogue."* On the other hand, Mr Peter Young continued ever after a favourite with the monarch, was employed by him in foreign embassies, honoured with a pension, and eventually knighted.

Some change must have taken place in James's domestic circumstances after the death of Lennox, when his governor, the Earl of Mar, was selected by the nobles of his party to be Regent ; an office which caused his Lordship to reside chiefly in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh, in order to carry on the siege of the Castle. Mar was one of the purest characters of that dreadful time, and one of the most peaceable. He endeavoured, by all means, to procure a cessation of arms between the King's and Queen's factions ; but he was not successful. After a turbulent government of little more than a year, he died on the 18th of October 1573, it was supposed of a broken heart. The Earl of Morton was chosen to succeed him.

* Osborn's Advice to a Son, 19.

One of the first acts of Morton's government, was an ordinance 'for continuing the King in the Castle of Stirling, under the care of the widow of the late Earl of Mar, *as to his mouth*, and the ordering of his person; but to continue under his present pedagogues; and the Castle to be kept in the name of the Earl of Mar.' *

The new Earl of Mar was a boy of eleven years at the time of his father's death; consequently, he was four years older than the King. Notwithstanding this disparity of age, which was considerable at such a period of life, the two boys were intimate friends. James, who had all his life a habit of conferring nick-names on those about him, gave young Mar the epithet of *the Sloven*, which was afterwards changed into the unintelligible one of *Jock o' Sklaitts*. Their sports, which they performed in company, are stated to have been bows and arrows, the foot-ball, catch-pole or tennis, *schule-the-brod* (shovel-board), billiards, and *call-the-guse*. James also played a good deal at cards, when a little further advanced in life; but he never was addicted to dice.

His studies, as the minutely inquiring Chalmers has shown, were commenced at a very early period of his life. In the books of the Treasurer of Scotland, under the date of May 1573, when he was only finishing his seventh year, there is a charge of 3*l.* 10*s.* 'for nine paper buikis to the King.' In the ensuing October, there is a charge of 8*l.* 8*s.* to Peter Young, 'for certane buikis to his Grace.' In February 1573-4, when seven and a half years old, 13*l.* 12*s.* is paid for repairing

* Chalmers's Life of Queen Mary, i. 394.

the King's *studie*, for making a new window, and other necessaries. *

These various matters certainly indicate an advancement in learning beyond what might have been expected from his years. His paper books must have been used for the writing of themes in translation from Latin. Books and a study under eight years, are also wonders in their way. Yet it is probable, that all the learning he had then acquired was of a kind but little suited to his understanding or to his necessities. James Melville, for instance, records in his Diary, that, on visiting Stirling, in October 1574 (when James was eight and a quarter), he beheld in his Majesty 'the sweetest sight in Europe for extraordinary gifts of ingyne, judgment, memory, and language.' — 'I heard him discourse,' says this writer, 'walking up and down, in the auld Lady Mar's hand, *of knowledge and ignorance*, to my great marvel and astonishment.' Surely any disquisition which such a young person could utter on the subject of knowledge and ignorance, must have been perfectly alien to his own mind—must have been placed there *en masse* by his instructors, and only delivered by rote.

Two or three anecdotes of James's school-boy days are related by Dr Irving, in his Life of Buchanan, on the credit of Dr Mackenzie, author of the Lives of Scottish Writers. 'The King having caught a fancy for a tame sparrow, which belonged to his playfellow, the Master (afterwards Earl) of Mar, solicited him without effect to transfer his right; and in endeavouring to wrest it

* Life of Queen Mary, i. 395.

out of his hand, he deprived the poor little animal of life. Erskine having raised due lamentation for its untimely fate, the circumstances were reported to Buchanan; who lent his young sovereign a box on the ear, and admonished him that he was himself a true bird of the bloody nest to which he belonged.

‘ A theme, which had one day been prescribed to the royal pupil, was the conspiracy of the Earl of Angus and other noblemen during the reign of James the Third. After dinner he was diverting himself with Mar; and, as Buchanan, who in the meantime was intent on reading, found himself annoyed by their obstreperous mirth, he requested the King to desist; but as no attention was paid to the suggestion, he threatened to accompany his next suggestion with something more formidable than words. James, whose ear had been tickled by the quaint application of the apologue mentioned in the theme, replied that he would be glad to see who would *bell the cat*. His venerable preceptor, who might have pardoned the remark, was perhaps offended with the mode in which it was uttered: he threw aside his book with indignation, and bestowed upon the delinquent that species of scholastic discipline which is deemed most ignominious. The Countess of Mar, being attracted by the wailing which ensued, hastened to the scene of his disgrace; and, taking the precious deposit in her arms, she demanded of Buchanan, how he presumed to lay his hand on the Lord’s anointed.’ To this interrogation he is said to have replied in a very unceremonious antithesis, which does not admit, in this delicate age, of the distinct specification which it received in the less scrupulous days of Dr Mac-

kenzie. 'A man,' concludes Dr Irving, 'who was no stranger to polished society, can hardly be suspected of such unpoliteness to a lady; unless we suppose her to have assumed a degree of insolence which rendered it expedient to convince her, by an overwhelming proof, that he disowned her authority.'

'One of the earliest propensities which James discovered,' says Dr Irving at another place, 'was an excessive attachment to favourites; and this weakness, which ought to have been abandoned with the other characteristics of childhood, continued to retain its ascendancy during every stage of his life. His facility of complying with every request alarmed the prophetic sagacity of Buchanan. On the authority of the poet's nephew, Chytræus has recorded a ludicrous expedient which he adopted for the purpose of correcting his pupil's conduct. He presented the young king with two papers, which he requested him to sign; and James, after having slightly interrogated him respecting their contents, readily appended his signature to each, without the precaution of even a cursory perusal. One of them was a formal transference of the royal authority for the term of fifteen days. When Buchanan had quitted the royal presence, one of the courtiers accosted him with his usual salutation: but to this astonished person he announced himself in the new character of a sovereign; and, with that happy urbanity of humour for which he was so distinguished, he began to assume the high demeanour of royalty. He afterwards preserved the same deportment towards James himself; and when the latter expressed his amazement at such extraordinary conduct, Buchanan

admonished him of his having resigned the crown. This reply did not tend to lessen the monarch's surprise ; for he now began to suspect his preceptor of mental derangement. Buchanan then produced that instrument by which he was formally invested ; and, with the authority of a tutor, proceeded to remind him of the absurdity of assenting to petitions in so rash a manner.

This anecdote seems to confirm the general impression which has been entertained regarding James's character in boyhood. He was of an easy, unsuspicious disposition ; apt to take men at their own showing, and equally disposed to expect that his own conduct would be construed as he meant it. He had a great deal of that indolent good nature, which is so often found in men of studious and literary habits. He also, like many men of good intellect, knew better what ought to be done, than he possessed force of character to put it in practice.

Some more certain information regarding Buchanan's relation to James, is to be gathered from two dedications which the teacher wrote to his pupil. It is particularly remarkable, from these compositions, that one of Buchanan's chief objects in his system of instruction, was to inspire the King with a hatred of tyranny, and a sense of its inexpediency. In the dedication to a short Latin tragedy, entitled '*Baptistes, sive calumniæ tragœdia*,' which was written in November 1576, when James was just out of his twelfth year, he says, 'But this more especially seems to belong to you, which explains the torments and miseries of tyrants, even when they seem to be in the most flourishing state, which I esteem not only

advantageous, but even necessary for you now to understand; that you may begin early to hate what you should always avoid. I desire also that this book may be a witness to posterity, that, if at any time you act otherwise, by the influence of wicked counsellors, or the wantonness of power getting the better of education, you may impute it not to your preceptors, but yourself, that slighted their good advice. God grant you a better fate, and (as your *favourite Sallust* has it) render beneficence natural to you by custom, which I sincerely wish and hope with many others.' Again, in the dedication of his more celebrated work, entitled 'De jure regni apud Scotos,' which was written three years later, he says he thought good to publish it, that it might be a standing witness of his affection towards him, and admonish him of his duty to his subjects. 'Many things,' says the writer, and the information is valuable, as proving the naturally good character of King James, 'persuaded me that this my endeavour should not be in vain; especially your age, not yet corrupted by prave opinions, and inclination far above your years for undertaking all *heroical* and noble attempts, spontaneously making haste thereunto; and not only your promptitude in obeying your instructors and governors, but all such as give you sound admonition; and your judgment and diligence in examining affairs, so that no man's authority can have much weight with you, unless it be confirmed by probable reason. I do perceive also,' continues Buchanan, 'that you, by a certain natural instinct, do much abhor flattery, which is the nurse of tyranny, and a most grievous plague of a kingdom; so as you

do hate the court solecisms and barbarisms, no less than those that seem to censure all elegancy do love and affect such things, and every where in discourse spread abroad as the sauce thereof, those titles of majesty, highness, and many other unsavoury compellations. Now, albeit your good natural disposition, and sound instructions, wherein you have been principled, may at present prevent you from falling into this error, yet am I forced to be something jealous of you, lest bad company, the fawning foster-mother of all vices, draw aside your soft and tender mind into the worst part; especially seeing I am not ignorant, how easily our other senses yield to seduction. This book, therefore, I have sent to you, to be not only your monitor, but also an importunate and bold exactor, which, in this your flexible and tender years, may conduct you in safety from the rocks of flattery, and not only admonish you, but also keep you in the way you are once entered into: and if at any time you deviate, it may reprehend and draw you back, the which if you obey, you shall, for yourself and all your subjects, acquire tranquillity and peace in life, and eternal glory in the life to come. From Stirling, January 10, 1579.'

It is strange that, while the sincerity of these attempts, on Buchanan's part, has been generally admired, no one has thought of pointing out the vanity with which he must have been inspired, in supposing that his political dreams were to have the power of directing his pupil in a novel and impracticable line of government. The second dedication was written after James had, in reality, assumed the management of the kingdom.

While these passages prove the amiable dispositions by which the young king was early distinguished, other circumstances manifest the notoriety which his accomplishments in learning had acquired for him at the same age, not only in his own country and England, but also throughout Europe. His fame, as a noted example of precocity of intellect, is particularly mentioned in a paper of *Remonstrances* which was afterwards presented to him by his nobles, when his addiction to favourites had begun to cloud the hopes originally entertained of him. There is yet extant, moreover, a paper, bearing date July 1576, and endorsed 'The Kingis Majesties Buikis : ' it contains a list of ninety-two different articles, of which the titles, all except two, are in Latin, suggesting chiefly well-known classical authors and books of divinity. * At this time James was just ten. Unquestionably, any knowledge he might then have attained beyond the mere elements of learning, could scarcely be well digested, or of much account in forming his mind. Neither was a proficiency in literature the qualification most necessary to him in the very difficult situation he had been called to. Yet praise must nevertheless be allowed to him for a taste so superior to his years, and for his having displayed at least the disposition towards intellectual employment.

Whatever were his school-day aspirations, James was not destined, more than the generality of students, to remain long in enjoyment of them. Those delicious dreams which all scholars experience in the morning of the intellect, were in him disturbed even earlier than they generally are in men of

* See Preface to new edition of 'the Reulis and Cautelis of Poesie,' by Mr R. P. Gillies.

inferior rank. The professional task which called this school-boy from his books, was no less than to re-edify, as it were, the Scottish monarchy, which had now lain for five-and-thirty years in ruins, under the feeble rule of women and regents. And it was his first duty to wrest his sceptre from the hand of MORTON !

It has been already mentioned, that this powerful nobleman became Regent in October 1573, after the death of the Earl of Mar. The Queen's party, which had stood out against all the three former Regents, soon perished before the forceful mind of Morton. He, in the first place, prevailed upon the Hamiltons and other friends of Mary throughout the country, to submit to him ; then he laid siege to Edinburgh Castle, in which Kirkaldy and Maitland were ensconced. To assist him in this enterprise, Queen Elizabeth, with whom he was in terms of the closest friendship, and who supported him as chief of the Protestant interest in Scotland, sent a body of men from Berwick, along with a train of artillery. Morton caused these guns, the greater part of which had been taken from his countrymen at Flodden, to be planted against the fortress ; and after a gallant resistance of thirty-four days, Kirkaldy capitulated on the promise of life.

Kirkaldy was acknowledged to be the very best soldier of his time in Scotland. He had served much abroad in his youth ; and Sir James Melvil informs us, that he had once seen Henry II. of France point him out, and say, " Yonder is one of the most valiant men of our age. " He is described as having been ' a lusty, strong, and well-proportioned personage, hardy, and of a magnanimous courage, secret and prudent in all his enterprises,

so that never one that he made or devised misgave where he was present himself. ' His enemies alleged of him, in envy, that he set himself up as ' another Wallace ; ' but if he did entertain an ambition so great, he as certainly possessed the qualifications which entitled him to do so. He was a constant enemy to the oppressor, and friend to the poor. He was ' humble, gentle, and meek like a lamb in the house, but like a lion in the fields. ' He did nothing for the sake of money or office ; his only motive was good principle, his only object honest fame.

This truly noble person fell a sacrifice to his own honourable feeling. Morton, on his accession to the regency, resolved to make no general treaty with the Queen's party. That would have left them still respectable in strength, and placed no profit to his own personal account. His plan was to treat with either the *castle* or the *country* part of the faction separately, and, having given good terms to the one, to fall upon the other and make it his prey. He first proposed this to Kirkaldy ; but that generous soldier rejected every offer which was not extended to his associates in the country. It was then laid before the country party, and accepted. Kirkaldy, consequently, left to himself, was easily reduced.

It was to the English ambassador, and not to Morton, that Kirkaldy and his friends professed to surrender themselves ; and accordingly, they were kept several days in the lodgings of that personage in the town, previous to their being carried into England. Morton, however, found means to get them into his own power ; and he then caused Kirkaldy to be hanged, like a common felon, at the city

cross. He was the more able to perform this violent action, that the captive was odious to the citizens on account of the damage he had done to the town in carrying on his defence, and also to the clergy for some offence he had given to the late John Knox. The people of that rude age beheld his amiable qualities, full-grown intellect, and accomplished reputation, all perish before their eyes, without the least regret, merely because he had injured a few of their house-tops, and remonstrated against the licentious tongue of one of their preachers.

After the reduction of the castle, Morton had not a single armed enemy in the country, the whole nation then agreeing to transfer their allegiance from the imprisoned Mary to her son. He carried on his government for some years with all the vigour which was to be expected from his character, and from his strict alliance with Elizabeth. His rule very much resembled that of his celebrated ally. It was a despotism of the most lofty and rigorous kind ; but, being exercised in behalf of the popular religion, it was much more agreeable to the people than the most lenient reigns, which wanted that saving and sanctioning clause. Nothing, for instance, could equal Morton's treatment of the clergy, so far as temporalities were concerned. He is said, by various modes of exaction, to have reduced them almost to starvation. Yet because he professed to be the head of the Protestant interest, and defended their faith in the abstract, they exclaimed very little against him, nothing being valuable in the eyes of this singular and most self-denying race of men, in comparison with the protection of what they esteemed the

true religion. The same redeeming quality induced the people to express far less indignation than they might otherwise have done, at his debasement of the national coin, although that measure was productive of serious misery to them, and was only designed for his own benefit.

The character of Morton is altogether one of the most frightful of all those produced by his age and nation. An age of reformation will ever teem with such flagitious characters, and the Scottish reformation was certainly no exception from the general rule. But Morton was decidedly the worst of them all. Moray's character is relieved in its lengthy catalogue of vices—ingratitude, duplicity, murder, and ambition—by that strange love of justice and latent worth, which procured him the popular epithet of *good*. Maitland had wit and sense to redeem his exquisitely fraudulent character. Bothwell, wretch as he seems to have been, was perhaps too much a mere adventurer—too much a vain-glorious fool, to occasion unqualified disgust. Morton's, however, is a portrait without a single light; it is a thorough *silhouette*. His character is to this day treated with some leniency by our historians on account of his religion. But this is entirely the result of *à posteriori* reasoning. The religion which enlightened and ripened the national mind through a succession of ages, and which now commands esteem from its known good effects, had no benign influence on the character of any man at the time of its institution. It does not appear to have been embraced by a single public personage of the period for its own intrinsic merits. Such persons adopted it merely as the best means of acquiring a power over the

populace, or a share of the spoils of the elder church. It is a very natural feeling which causes us to look back with gratitude to any one who has even unintentionally done us good ; but surely it is one which reason should endeavour to combat, or at least control.

Morton's character seems to have at last approached to something like the ogre of nursery fable or the giant of romance. He was a short but handsome man, dark even to the extremity of the family hue of the Douglasses ; his features were all in masses, corrugated and knotty ; his eyes gleamed keenly over a pair of high cheek-bones ; and his mouth, as seen imperfectly through a black bushy beard, had that prominent and ferocious aspect which in savage life indicates mere animal cupidity, but in the civilized condition betokens a propensity to all the lower passions. Although he was not the chief of the Douglas family, his great abilities and eminence in public life, together with the circumstance of his nephew the Earl of Angus being a minor, had long placed the whole power of that clan in his hands. Thus, he had a large *following*, as it was called, of adventurous dependants ; who, regarding his will as a law, would have scrupled to execute no measure he chose to dictate. He had also taken great pains to fortify various castles throughout the country, for the reception of his immense gains, and the protection of his person. His chief residence was the castle of Dalkeith, six statute miles from Edinburgh. That house he had fortified in so careful a manner, and with such complicated strength, that the common people, remembering his character as the inhabitant, termed it *the Lion's Den*.

In the words of a quaint old writer, 'he erected that palace of Dalkeith to his no small charge, adorning it with tapestry and incomparable pieces of art, so that its splendour soars almost to a majesticall statelinessse.' * He also re-built the castle of Edinburgh from the ruined state in which the siege had left it; and to show how much he considered it a house for his own use, he caused the architect to place his own arms above the Scottish lion which overhung the principal gateway. As if even these fortresses in the metropolitan part of the kingdom were not sufficient for his protection he began to build a prodigious castle in the uplands of Tweeddale, apparently designing it as his last retreat when all others should have failed him, it being in a place where no artillery could have been brought to annoy him, and where a body of besiegers would have subsisted with difficulty. This strength (Drochils Castle) he did not live to finish; but the traveller through those lonely regions still sees with surprise an immense pile of stone-work rising from the bleak hill-side near his path, a monument of the wealth and terrific character of this singular man.

Among all the sins of Morton, his cupidity, perhaps, was the most dangerous to himself, both because it was the vice he could least control, and because it was apt to excite the most implacable sort of hostility against him among the people. He is stated by the old writer last quoted, to have once been reproved for this his besetting sin, by one of the professed jesters of his household—for Morton, with all his lofty characteristics, was not

* See R. Buchanan's *Scotia Rediviva*, i. 388.

superior to this folly of his age—and the manner was thus:—Some beggars one day applying to the Regent for his alms, Patrick Bowie, the personage mentioned, called to his Grace by all means to have these fellows burned to death. “What!” exclaimed Morton, “and are ye so uncharitable as to refuse mercy to those who so earnestly seek it?” “Why,” answered the fool, “although ye were to commit these men to the flames to-day, you could, ere the sun run his course to-morrow, make as many rich men beggars.”

His immoderate exactions at length excited so general a disgust, that the nation seemed only in want of a head to rise against him. This was supplied by the Earls of Argyle and Athole. These two noblemen having quarrelled regarding a Highland robber, and being on the point of commencing hostilities against each other, Morton caused them to be summoned to his presence, for the purpose, as they suspected, of being subjected to a fine for their disturbance of the peace. Their common danger caused them to unite against him; and, Alexander Erskine, uncle of the minor Earl of Mar, and his representative, as keeper of the King's person, happening, at the same time, to conceive a grudge at Morton, they found, through his means, access to the King, whom they wished to interest in their cause of complaint.

Morton, strange to say, had paid little attention to his interest in this important quarter. Seldom visiting James, he continued to consider him as a mere boy from whom he had nothing to apprehend. He had even lost the affections of every individual around James's person, without a thought

of the mischief to which he thereby exposed himself. Buchanan he had offended irreconcilably, if we are to believe Mr James Melvill, by withholding an ambling nag, which the pedagogue had lost during the civil wars, and which Morton had then bought. The Laird of Drumquassel, who was governor of the young King's household, also conceived mortal hatred at the Regent, for the very excellent reason that all the lickings of his office were anticipated by that voracious personage. Alexander Erskine had his own cause of wrath; and so had every other person, high and low, who attended upon the King. Morton was at length made conscious, by a friend, of the danger which threatened him in this quarter, and saw fit to bestow a few douceurs upon the various persons he had formerly offended. But this was rendered of little avail by the penetration of the young King. Whenever any of the reformed servants began to speak favourably of Morton, James at once reminded them of the different tone in which they had talked of him before, and asked how they had come to change their coats. He had himself no reason to regard Morton favourably, but was rather induced to wish his power brought down, that he might himself assume the government, for which, young as he was, some of his companions had already persuaded him he was fit.

Alexander Erskine having secretly admitted the Earls of Argyle and Athole to James's presence, it was now resolved that letters should be despatched to all the nobles whom they knew to be hostile to Morton, calling them to a convention at Stirling, for the purpose of deliberating on an alteration of the government. This being done with prudence and

expedition, a majority of the grandees had met to procure Morton's downfall, before he was himself aware of any design against him. Being quite unprepared, and finding no adequate party at hand to support him, he surprised the convention in his turn, by sending them an offer of his surrender of authority. This the King accepted, commanding him at the same time to deliver up the castle of Edinburgh. Morton then retired, as an old writer expresses it, 'to Lochleven Castle, to make the walks of his garden even, but his mind still occupied in crooked paths ;' * while James, at the age of twelve, assumed the sovereign power, under the controul of a council of nobles.

The lords, however, were, after all, more indebted for this change to Morton's want of preparation, than to any thing else. A very little time enabled him to rally his friends and his courage ; and three months had scarcely elapsed, ere he found himself again seated in considerable authority at the King's council-board, within Stirling Castle. Seeing the necessity of now paying court to the young monarch, he applied himself assiduously to that task ; and he soon succeeded so well, as to procure his consent to an ambassage to England. The nobles again took alarm, and prepared to suppress him a second time. But as he had surrounded himself with three or four thousand of his nephew's retainers, the task was now one of greater difficulty. Contriving, nevertheless, to raise an army of magnitude equal to his own, they marched against him ; and a meeting took place between the two hosts on the banks of the

* Sir James Melvill.

Carron, betwixt Falkirk and Stirling. By the mediation of Bowes, the English ambassador, the differences of the two parties were composed for this time, Morton agreeing that a certain number of the enemy should be admitted into the King's council, as a counterbalance to his own authority. The government was afterwards carried on for a considerable time on this modified plan.

James appears to have conducted himself, during these struggles, with a degree of impartiality and caution above what was to be expected from his boyish years. In a speech which he made to the contending parties after the pacification, he professed to regard both with the affection due from a monarch to his chief nobility, and earnestly repeated, several times, that his only wish was to see them united in one friendly council around him. It seems to have been very early perceived by James, that a neutral and negative mode of conduct was the only one by which he could hope to *bruiik* his government, as he would himself have said, in peace or comfort. Divided as the nation was on the subject of religion; himself distracted betwixt the party which had hitherto governed him, and that which was inclined henceforth to serve him; at once obliged to govern a country inclined to Presbyterianism, and yet to act in such a way as not to offend the Episcopalian kingdom which he expected to inherit; it may easily be conceived that his situation as a ruler was one of extreme difficulty. Nor was he a monarch who succeeded peaceably to a government left him by a father, and who finds a path chalked out before him. His patrimonial monarchy, poor at the very best, as compared with others, was in absolute

ruins even at the moment when he, an infant of thirteen months, had become possessed of it. As he grew up, he found his right of rule partly usurped by the nobles, who had necessarily assumed the direction of affairs during the minorities of his mother and himself, and partly denied or scoffed at by the people, whose opinions on that subject were now modulated to the humour of a church decidedly republican. It was his task to retrieve a little of the authority which was thus strangely impignorated; and, in making the attempt, the utmost caution was necessary.

Whatever wish he might possess to have the friendship of the nobles, he either did not attempt to secure it, or, if he did attempt it, he did not succeed in gaining his end. In his youth, we find him abandoned almost entirely to the guidance of two individuals, neither of whom belonged to that influential class—James Stuart, a second son of Lord Ochiltree, and Esme or Amatus Stuart, a cousin of his father, and nephew of the late Earl of Lennox. The first of these men was a military adventurer of peculiarly bold temper, and, it is said, of flagitious life, but very much attached to the person of the young monarch, and inclined to stick at nothing in doing him service. Esme Stuart was a person of gentler, and in every respect better character. The first had been introduced to James's friendship in the capacity of a captain in his body guard. The other came to Scotland, to prosecute his claims on the Lennox Peerage and estate. James's attachment to them has been stigmatised as favouritism; and the vices of the first, and Catholicism of the second, have been alike fruitful subjects of invective, to their

contemporaries and to modern historians. But, laying the youth of James out of the question altogether, it was surely allowable, in so tumultuous and difficult a scene, to seek refuge in the bosoms of two friends about his own age, who professed a friendship for his own sake. If we look back upon the history of Scotland for a century before his time, we find every king endeavouring to form a personal guard of friends around him, distinct from the territorial powers. Such were Cochrane and others to James III., such the clergy and the commons to James V., such the French guard to the Queen Regent, and such was Rizzio to Mary. As it would thus appear to have been rather a measure of necessity than any thing else, we are led to believe that James's adoption of these two youthful favourites was a much more excusable matter than it is generally represented to have been.

One of the first services of a public nature which the two Stuarts performed for him, was their procuring the ruin of his formidable minister, or rather master, the Earl of Morton. James Stuart was the most active and apparent agent in this affair. Entering the Council-room one day, he fell down upon his knees, and accused the Earl of Morton of being concerned in the murder of the late King Henry, (Lord Darnley.) The Earl was immediately seized, and committed to Edinburgh Castle. He had procured an act of council and parliament, on the demission of his regency, assuring him that he should never be afterwards blamed for any deed committed before that time. But it was not one of the maxims of state in Scotland at this period, to pay attention to a claim un-

enforced by strength of arms or their influence. Of all such means of defence Morton was now destitute, the party of his friends being weak compared with that which wished his destruction. Elizabeth, who felt her own interest at stake with his life, interfered, it is true, with all her influence to preserve him, and, when embassies failed, even resorted to the measure of gathering an army on the borders to intimidate the King. But this last act only insured the death of her friend ; for an army being necessarily raised to defend the frontiers, James used it as a guard to convey Morton to the scaffold, when he could not perhaps have accomplished his bold undertaking by other means.

In exact proportion as we regard the character of the living and reigning Morton with the awe due to majestic villany, so do we contemplate the circumstances of his death with feelings of an agitating and painful nature. The mind, indeed, which has for any length of time studied the life of this man, in all its circumstances of power, talent, ferocity, and pride, is apt, when it comes to look upon him in his degraded condition, to wonder how men were found to manacle and guard, how jurors were found to condemn, and how an executioner was found to behead him. He was kept for several months before his trial in Dunbarton Castle, the property of his chief enemy, Esme Stuart, who was now created Duke of Lennox. During the interval, his other grand enemy Captain James Stuart, was created Earl of Arran, a title just vacated by the attainder of the powerful house of Hamilton, which Morton is said to have furthered before his accusation, in consequence of a prophecy which foretold that the *heart* (his

cognizance) should fall by the *mouth of Arran*. When the precept arrived at Dunbarton Castle for transporting him to Edinburgh, he was startled at seeing the Earl of Arran mentioned in it as one of the two who should command his guard. Inquiring of the keeper of the castle who this Arran was, and being informed that it was Stuart, he was struck with surprise. "And is it so?" he said; "I know, then, what I may look for." It was supposed that he looked upon this accidental re-appearance of the dreaded name, in connection with a sworn enemy, as a certain proof that the prophecy should hold good.

His trial took place at Edinburgh on the first of June 1581. As he himself observed, it did not signify whether, in the matter charged to him, he was as innocent as St Stephen, or as guilty as Judas. His death was determined on, and he was accordingly condemned. On the morning of the succeeding day (that of his execution), he was waited on by some of the ministers of Edinburgh, to whom he uttered a lengthened confession of his concern in Darnley's murder, amounting to no more than the guilt of fore-knowing and concealing it. He also joined them in some devotional exercises, and entered into a discussion of the state of his mind on the score of religion, and his hopes of immortality. When that was done, he invited his ghostly counsellors to breakfast with him; which they consented to, although far less disposed to eat than the unhappy culprit before them. *He* ate his breakfast with great cheerfulness, talking all the time.

One of his remarks on this occasion supplies us with a very curious psychological fact. "I now

observe," said he, "that there is a great difference between a man who is occupied with the cares of the world, and him that is free from them: the night before my accusation, I could get no rest for care; anxiety to prepare proper answers for any charge which should be put to me on the morrow, kept me awake the whole night. Last night, on the contrary, when I knew I only had to die, I never slept better in my life. William," he added, turning to Captain William Stuart of the guard, "you can bear me record of this?" Stuart answered, "it is true, my Lord," and confirmed the belief of the hearers in a circumstance which they might otherwise have questioned.

Mr Walter Balcanqual, a minister, now said to him, "My Lord, I will drink to you, on condition that you and I shall drink together, in the kingdom of heaven, of that immortal drink which shall never suffer us to thirst again." He answered, "Truly, I will pledge you, Mr Walter, on the same condition." Having then taken up a cup, he said to John Dury, another of the clergymen in attendance, "John, I will drink to you on the same condition;" to which proposal John assented; and the whole three then drank this singular toast. He afterwards retired to the solitude of an inner chamber, where he spent the hours of the forenoon.

Early in the afternoon, the clergymen returned, and in a still greater number. Morton, singling out Mr John Ferguson, whom he had not seen at breakfast, embraced him very cordially. "Mr John," said he to this individual, "you once wrote a little book against me; but truly, I never meant evil

towards you in my mind : forgive you me, and I forgive you." This behaviour moved Ferguson to tears. He then sat down to dinner. During his meal, the clergymen, learning that the King had received an erroneous account of his confession, it was resolved that three of them should go to Holyroodhouse, where his Majesty was now residing, and give him a more correct report of it, so that the Ex-Regent might die with a satisfied mind on that score. They did so, and the result was an order that he should be beheaded at once, without the preliminary ceremony of hanging.

When the clergymen returned with this order, the jailor informed him that he must now proceed to the scaffold. " Seeing they have troubled me so much to-day," said he, " with worldly things, I thought they would have given me a night beside, to have advised ripely with my God." The keeper answered, " All things are now ready, my Lord, and I think they will not stay." " I praise my God," said he, " I am ready also," and immediately passed towards the gate.

Here a strange scene occurred. Arran now came ruffling up, and, having led him back to the chamber, requested him to tarry till his confession should be put in writing, and signed with his name. " Nay, my Lord," said Morton, " trouble me no more, I pray you, with these things. I am now at a point to go to my death, and have a much nobler thing to muse on—to prepare for my God. I cannot write in the state wherein I now am. All these honest men can testify to what I have spoken in that matter."

Arran, touched perhaps by the resignation of

the man he had persecuted to death, now expressed a wish to part with him on good terms. "My Lord," he said, "you will be reconciled to me: I assure you I have done nothing against you from any particular grudge, but in the mere course of my duty to the King." Morton replied, "It is no time now to remember quarrels: I have no quarrel to you nor any other: I forgive you and all others, as I will you forgive me." This whole interview certainly puts the *bad taste* of the age in a striking point of view.

Morton then passed towards the scaffold. It was remarked of him, as a very unexpected thing, that, being solicited for charity as he went along by a multitude of beggars, he had no money of his own, but was obliged to have recourse to a friend who accompanied him, before he could perform the distribution of his own *dead-dole*, so it was called, in the style expected from a culprit of his rank. The people were thus perplexed more than ever, as to the fate of the immense loads of gold which he had amassed during his government.

When arrived at the last fatal stage, he addressed the people with a firm countenance and voice, more than once using the expression—"Sure I am, the King shall lose a good servant this day."—"I testify before God," said he, "as I professed the gospel which this day is taught and professed in Scotland, so also I willingly lay down my life in the profession thereof; and, howbeit I have not walked thereunto as I ought, yet I am assured God will be merciful to me. I pray you all, good Christians, pray for me. I charge you all in the name of God that are professors of the gospel, that ye continue in the true profession thereof, and main-

tain it to your power, as I should have done (God willing) with my life, lands, and goods, aye and as long as I had lived ; which, if you do, I assure you God will be merciful to you. But if you do it not, be sure the vengeance of God shall light on you, body and soul."

An earnest prayer was then made in his behalf by one of the attendant clergy ; during which Morton lay prostrate on his face, giving manifest signs, by the rebounding of his body from the scaffold, as well as by audible sobs, of the effect which it had upon his feelings. When that was done, a number of persons came, like Arran, to be reconciled to him. All these he received with expressions of kindness. He then advanced with a placid countenance to the block, laid down his head, and began to utter such devout ejaculations as " Lord Jesus, receive my soul ! into thy hands, Lord, I commit my spirit ! " which were only interrupted by the descent of the axe. *

To increase the public excitement which attended Morton's execution, it was performed by a novel instrument, which he himself had introduced into Scotland, and which had an uncommonly dreadful appearance. This instrument he copied from one he had seen in his youth in Italy ; but, though he caused it to be constructed some time during his government, it had never been used till now, when, probably in consequence of the remission of that part of his sentence which condemned him to be hanged, it was applied in his own favour. It almost exactly resembled the modern French

* MS. Account of Morton's confession and last moments, in Matthew Crawford's Collections, Advocates' Library.

guillotine; and it still exists. The epithet of 'the Maiden,' by which it is now so well known, was conferred upon it by the populace, in metaphorical allusion to the circumstance of Morton having been the first that submitted to its embraces. *

During the whole of that long summer afternoon, Morton's body lay on the public scaffold, covered only by a beggar's blue gown, no man, out of all the thousands who had formerly waited on his nod, now daring to give it burial. It was at length conveyed by porters to the place where criminals were usually interred. His head was next day fixed on the tolbooth. †

* This is stated distinctly in 'ΠΡΟΝΟΙΑ, or Remarkable Instances of Divine Providence,' a curious manuscript of the reign of Charles II., in the Advocates' Library.

† Spottiswoode's Church History, 314.

CHAPTER III.

RAID OF RUTHVEN—ARRAN'S GOVERNMENT—RETURN OF THE
BANISHED NOBLES—JAMES'S FIRST LITERARY EFFORT.

1584.

FROM the very first, James was the *protegé* of Elizabeth, who wished in him to rear a Scottish monarch, that should add the support of his kingdom to the Protestant bulwark which she was building up against the Catholics, and an heir to her own kingdom, whose religious principles should give no countenance or cause of hope to that party. Throughout all his early years, she had contrived to further these objects, by having him and his kingdom under the control of Regents, who were subservient to her interests. Now, however, when he had attained to nearly a mature age, and was himself in possession of the government, she found her task a somewhat more difficult one, inasmuch as he showed symptoms of a wish to be-think and act for himself; and even seemed inclined to lend a favourable ear to the solicitations with which he was plied by the Catholics and other friends of his mother, who proposed to him a scheme for associating her in the government with himself. There was indeed great reason for Elizabeth to

fear that his first emotions, on attaining to the rank of manhood, should dispose him to regard his mother, and consequently her religion and her party, with a degree of favour inconsistent with the interests of the Reformation. And he really seems to have given her some occasion to believe this fear well-grounded. All the discipline of Buchanan, and all the rigours of the Calvinistic theory in which he was educated, had failed to make him what was wanted. Like many other youths who are *too carefully* educated, he seemed disposed to baulk entirely the wishes of his friends. His surrendering his affections to Lennox, who was a Catholic, and appeared as an emissary of the French king, was an almost decisive proof of his disposition to shake off his 'good cousin and sister of England.' Finally, she could no longer doubt that he was nearly lost to her, when he sacrificed Morton to the demands of Lennox; Morton, her most confidential friend, and who had even consented, it is said, to a scheme which she proposed for carrying James to England, and placing him as a prisoner in her hands.

It must therefore be perceived, that, after Morton's execution, James's attachment to the Protestant interest was extremely problematical—or rather, abandoned as he was to the guidance of Lennox, that he gave Elizabeth, and the Protestants in general, reason to suppose he was entirely thrown into the hands of the Catholics.

This was a state of things not to be long endured in a country where the majority were reformed, and the influence of an alien Protestant sovereign was paramount to the native government. Elizabeth and the Scotch Protestant lords

very soon rallied against the danger which threatened them ; and within the course of a year after Morton's death, they had matured a conspiracy for bringing James back again into their control. The transaction is known in Scottish history by the epithet of the *Raid* (or enterprise) of *Ruthven*, from the warlike aspect which it assumed in conformity with the spirit of the time, and from the place where it was carried into effect.

James, who early showed a passion for field sports, was, in August 1582, conducted for the first time into Athole, to enjoy the pleasures of a Highland hunting-match. On that occasion, for some reason unexplained, neither Lennox nor Arran accompanied him. The first stayed behind in the castle of Dalkeith, which he had acquired with other parts of Morton's property. The second remained at Kinneil, a castle in West Lothian, of which he had become possessed in a similar way, in consequence of the attainder of the Hamiltons. As the King was returning from the Highlands, he was led aside to spend a night in Ruthven Castle, a seat of the Earl of Gowrie, near Perth. Here, during the evening, he was surprised to observe that a great number of armed men arrived at the house, in parties, without any very apparent errand. Not chusing to express any fear, although he felt a great deal, he waited patiently till next day, when, as he was about to pass from his chamber, the Master of Glamis thrust his foot against the opening door, and informed him that he must stay where he was. James, seriously alarmed, tried every method to move this stern janitor, threatened, entreated, and finally burst into tears. "No matter for his tears,"

said the Master ; “ it’s better bairns should greet than bearded men.” The heads of the conspiracy then approached—to wit, the Earls of Gowrie, Athole, Mar, Rothes, and Glencairn, with some of inferior title,—and presented a written remonstrance to the young King, praying him to remove his two favourites from his councils, and adopt a ministry more agreeable to his people. James saw the necessity of treating the paper with respect, but was not able altogether to conceal the indignation which he felt at the restraint imposed upon his person.

It was soon publicly known that the King was detained at Ruthven ; and the two favourites lost no time in attempting to procure his release. Lennox sent a messenger to inquire into his condition ; but, on James declaring to this person that he was a prisoner, the conspirators put him also into confinement. Arran, on learning what had taken place, immediately rode to Ruthven, and with a boldness which almost redeems the bad qualities attributed to him, presented himself single before the enraged men who had met for his destruction. When they heard him loudly demanding to be introduced to the King, they would have instantly sacrificed him to their resentment ; but he was saved by the intercession of the Countess of Gowrie, to whom he happened to be distantly related. He was only commanded to keep himself secluded from public affairs in a remote part of the kingdom, under the penalty of treason. Lennox was, at the same time, commanded to sequester himself in his castle of Dunbarton.

Various attempts were made by this last nobleman to rouse the spirit of the nation in behalf of

their monarch, whom he represented as in the greatest personal danger, from a band of enemies. But every attempt he made was frustrated by the edicts of the very person he wished to serve, the conspirators obliging the King to assure the people by proclamations, that he was perfectly contented with his situation, and to order all bodies of men which had been associated in his behalf to be dispersed. Even without these edicts, it does not appear that he could have effectually made head against the confederated noblemen. The clergy had at once perceived the conspiracy to be favourable to their religion and form of church government; and the people, taking their cue from the preachers, were in general disposed to let the King remain where he was.

James was successively brought to Perth, Stirling, and Edinburgh, treated all the way with respect, but still most carefully guarded. When the news of the Raid reached Elizabeth, she affected surprise, and sent two ambassadors down to Scotland for the ostensible purpose of inquiring into his circumstances, and condoling with him upon them, if they should be found painful, though all the time she was in reality at the bottom of the plot. His mother, too, very soon heard of an affair which was so directly contrary to her interest; and, from her prison, she addressed a letter to the English Queen, praying her to rescue James from his rebellious subjects. The Catholic princes of the Continent were also soon made aware of what had taken place; and the King of France sent two ambassadors to Scotland, to endeavour all they could to procure James's release.

But every effort which James or his friends

could make to procure his freedom, was for some time unsuccessful. The conspirators, knowing that their object, and even their personal safety, could only be secure so long as they retained him, were vigilant and inexorable to the last degree. They never trusted him for a moment out of their sight. They directed him in every public act. No friend, whether native or foreign, was permitted to speak to him, except in their presence. Lennox they compelled to retire to France, where he soon after died of chagrin. And the French ambassadors were treated with a degree of coldness, which speedily obliged them to quit the country.

James continued in this state of constraint for ten months. At length, about the end of June 1583, he had with great skill and secrecy devised a plan for escape. Towards the end of his period of confinement, the confederated lords began to relax a little in their vigilance. Arran had by that time been so long banished, that they ceased to fear his return. Lennox they knew to be dead. James himself had thought proper to express such an acquiescence in their views, as led them to suppose him quite reconciled to their control. They now, therefore, scrupled less to admit suspected noblemen to his presence, and permitted him to have a wider scope in pursuing his favourite sports.

Under favour of these circumstances, James found means to attach a party to his own personal interests, consisting of the Earls of Argyle, Marischal, and Montrose, besides the Earl of Rothes, who had been one of the confederates. Having contrived a scheme with these nobles, he left

Edinburgh for Fife, through which county he proposed enjoying a hawking-match, previous to attending a convention of Estates which had been called to meet at St Andrews. On this occasion, few of the Ruthven conspirators attended him, most of them having retired to their country seats, to look after their own affairs. As he passed along the country betwixt Falkland and St Andrews, he was joined by numbers of the new conspirators; so that when he reached the archiepiscopal city, he was in such strength as to defy his late ministry. Having taken possession of the primate's castle, formerly the stronghold of Beaton, he no longer scrupled to declare himself free.

James was by no means rendered an unaccountable despot by this new arrangement. The lords who assisted him in procuring his liberation, were only a shade less disposed to constrain him than his former controllers. It was only, indeed, upon an understanding that he was to pardon the Ruthven conspirators, and act for the future in concert with a council of his chief nobles, that his new friends consented to assist him. Accordingly, his first act, after regaining his liberty, was to publish an edict, allowing the Raid of Ruthven to have been good service, and professing that he should not henceforth permit it, or any other past occurrence, to be an obstacle to the agreement of his nobility, and the general contentment of his subjects.

James's whole conduct, after this conspiracy, was that of a good-tempered man. Although his confinement had been very uneasy, and must have left a painful impression on his mind, as tending to diminish him in the eyes of his subjects and of

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the neighbouring sovereigns, yet he expressed no reluctance whatever to pardon the men chiefly instrumental in it. The simplest expression of contrition on their part was sufficient to procure not only the forgiveness, but even the renewed friendship, of the easy-natured monarch. For instance, the Earl of Gowrie, although the principal conspirator, was the very first to be received upon these cheap terms into favour; and James did not hesitate, within the course of a few days after the regainment of his liberty, to visit this nobleman at the very house where his capture took place ten months before, and there grant him a formal remission of his supposed offence. It is generally stated by historians, upon the credit of Spottiswoode, that the King never forgot the disrespectful language which the Master of Glamis used on shutting the door against him at Ruthven. But those who are so glad to draw unfavourable conclusions from this report, surely overlook the fact, that James employed the Master of Glamis in the high office of Treasurer, for the ten years between 1585 and 1595, a period when he was completely the director of his own affairs.

Had James only possessed strength of mind to continue the conduct thus pointed out by his easy disposition, there would have been very little to blame in the immediately ensuing part of his history. Unfortunately, the very facility of temper which caused him so easily to overlook the Ruthven treason, was the means of soon after throwing his government into as confused a state as ever. It seems to have been one of the stipulations of his new friends, that Arran should be no more admitted to his presence. Accordingly, when the

Earl solicited permission to congratulate him on his emancipation, he was scrupulously refused. James, however, still regarding that bold and vicious man with the reverence which the best natures are so often observed to pay to the worst, merely from the sense of inferior vigour of character, entreated that the Earl might, as he wished, just be admitted to kiss his hand, and spend one day at court. The request being granted, he at once relapsed into his former weakness, honoured Arran with a complete restoration to his affection and his councils, and from that time became once more the slave of a favourite. One of the causes of this seems to have been, the King's passion for amusement. He had hitherto, according to the advice of Sir James Melville and other sagacious old servants, attended an hour every day in council, to receive personally the benefit of a multitude of good advices on his affairs. But he was now persuaded by the Earl of Arran to depute this business to him, so that his sports might not be interrupted, and only to receive from his lordship a report of what had passed in council after his return from the fields. When Arran had once gained this point, it was easy for him to attain the rest. By giving his master false reports of the council, and inciting him to act accordingly, he became once more, what he had formerly been, the dictator of the whole government.

Immediately, a different course of policy was pursued in regard to the late conspiracy. A proclamation was issued, ordering all who had been concerned in it to take remissions of their crime; which, being interpreted as an insidious attempt to bring them into an acknowledgment of the guilt

of treason, and as calculated to subject them to all the penalties due to that offence, caused inexpressible alarm. No one obeying the proclamation, Arran published another, threatening to esteem all who should not deliver themselves up on a certain day as traitors. The Earl of Angus alone obeyed this second edict; all the rest either fled to England, or remained in hiding at home.

By this course, Arran succeeded in rendering himself perfectly single in the direction of his master's affairs, and enriched himself with a vast harvest of forfeitures. The estate of the Earl of Gowrie was one of the chief objects of his cupidity, and it is to be regretted that the indecisive conduct of that nobleman gave the unworthy favourite but too good an opportunity of gratifying his wishes. The King, who entertained a sincere friendship for Gowrie, endeavoured to reconcile him and Arran, by bringing them to a meeting at Cupar. But it was not the soft entreaties of the simple-minded young monarch that could save his friend. Arran contrived to give Gowrie sufficient reasons for alarm to make him take refuge at Dundee, and prepare to quit the country. While he was yet lingering there, the Earls of Mar and Angus, with the Master of Glamis, engaged him in a conspiracy to re-erect their own party and depose Arran. These three noblemen, on the 18th of April, 1584, surprised Stirling Castle, which had been for some time in the keeping of the favourite. But as they were expecting to hear of corresponding measures on the part of Gowrie, they learned that he had just been seized by a party of the king's guard. While they were as yet unrecovered from the consternation consequent upon that intelligence, they also learned that

Arran had rallied a large army round the King, and was marching with him to Stirling. Of course, they abandoned their enterprise, and again sought safety out of Scotland. Gowrie was then tried for his recent offence, condemned, and, to the great regret of all the liberal and Presbyterian party, as well as all who really wished well to James, beheaded at the cross of Stirling.

It was not by this violent proceeding alone that Arran's government was distinguished. Several persons of less note fell sacrifices to his resentment. So far indeed did James permit his better nature to be overborne by this man, that he allowed a sentence of forfeiture to pass against the Countess of Mar, the virtuous old lady who had nursed his infancy with such scrupulous care; and he soon after allowed the last pains of the law to take effect on Cunningham of Drumwhassel, who had been master of his household. At the same time, he consented to a great number of acts of parliament which were driven through by Arran, violently adverse to the interests as well as the liberties of his subjects.

It was in an especial degree against the church that Arran directed his vengeance; and the church at that time, unfortunately, lay peculiarly exposed to the malevolence of such a ruler. Perhaps it is necessary to explain the present circumstances of this body. Its chief feature was an independence of spirit, which disposed its members to allow of no control or supervision on the part of the state, and which caused them to declaim publicly from the pulpit against every proceeding of the court, with which they happened to be displeased. The times had long countenanced them in these lofty privileges, for, during the first age which suc-

ceeded the Reformation, there had been no government in the country strong enough to resist them. The people, moreover, were disposed in their own minds to pay so much reverence to the clergy, that no claims which they could present, wanted enforcement from public opinion. It was one of the fundamental beliefs of the church in that age, that, as their faith was founded solely on scripture, so should they be ruled only by the divine being who devised that code of doctrine; that, to use their own words, Christ was the only and true head of their church. It is needless at the present day, when such a belief is only cherished by a few obscure sects, to point out that this was just making themselves their own rulers, since, on account of the invisibility and non-presence of their supposed head, they were obliged to act as his representatives: neither is it necessary to assert in favour of the government of that age, that neither it, nor any other government then established in Europe, could have co-existed with such a scheme, if instituted in the full vigour which the clergy contemplated. It may only be allowable to the calm thinker of the present day, to regret the extremes to which men then carried their opinions on such subjects; extremes as natural, perhaps, after the impulse given to public opinion by the Reformation, as the first wide oscillations of the pendulum after it has been put into motion.

It could scarcely be supposed, that a body which was at once inspired with an assurance of its own irresponsibility, and with a violent horror of every exertion of a similar privilege in the government, should long continue on good terms with the Earl of Arran, especially as it had expressed open joy

at his late deposition by the Ruthven confederacy, and thus secured his mortal hatred. At his very first assumption of the supreme power, many of them acknowledged their fears by flying to England. Others of a bolder temper, who had stood out, now gave him the very opportunities he wished of crushing them, by inveighing against his government from the pulpit. Among others, the noted Andrew Melvill was selected for vengeance. He was accused of having openly censured the King before his congregation. He succeeded in disproving the particular charges brought against him; but still, as he was a peculiarly violent leader in the pseudo-irresponsible courts of the church, it was resolved that he should not escape. He was charged with the crime of declining the judgment of the Privy Council; and commanded, under the pain of treason, to enter himself in ward, as it was called, within the Castle of Blackness, which was then kept by Arran, and in which, of course, his life would have been in great danger. To avoid the fate that seemed to be prepared for him, he fled to England; an event which spread consternation and rage amongst the clergy and their flocks, who justly regarded Melvill as the chief pillar of their tabernacle.

Elizabeth, who could not fail to regard Arran's proceedings with alarm, thought proper, at this juncture, to send a personage of no less note than her secretary Sir Francis Walsingham, to inquire what could be done in Scotland towards establishing a better state of things. Walsingham, on account of his great age and ill health, travelled in a carriage; and to protect his person, he was escorted by no fewer than a hundred and forty Eng-

lish gentlemen on horseback. James felt flattered by receiving so dignified an ambassador, and treated Sir Francis with much distinction at Perth, where they held a lengthened discourse on the state of the kingdom. Strange to say, the youthful monarch, although weak enough to permit Arran to misgovern his country in the way described, talked in so very plausible and sensible a style with the English secretary, that, at his leaving the presence-chamber, he could not help exclaiming to Sir James Melvill, "that he was the best content man that could be, for he had spoken with a notable young prince, ignorant of nothing, and of so great expectation, that he thought his travel well bestowed." Walsingham utterly refused to have the least intercourse with Arran; which so offended the latter, that, instead of sending him a rich ring of seven hundred crowns value, which the King had appointed to be presented to him at his departure, he gave him a mean bauble, gemmed only with a piece of crystal. The exact purpose of this embassy has never been defined, for it was followed by no result; but there can be no doubt that Elizabeth wished to impose some control of a more salutary nature than that of Arran, over "her good cousin of Scotland." It is certain that Walsingham gave her an extremely favourable account of James, insomuch that, fearing it should spread amongst her people, and cause them to shift part of their reverence from her own person to his, she thought proper to put the secretary for some time out of favour.

Elizabeth seems to have been convinced by Walsingham's report, that Scotland would now require a different mode of management from that which

she had hitherto practised. James had arrived at that period of life when the senses are least under the guidance of reason. It was now possible for him to form such a matrimonial connexion, as might derange all her schemes, and even prove of serious detriment to the interests of her people. In order to prevent the possibility of his marrying a Catholic, which she of all things most dreaded, and which she had some reason to fear might take place, she despatched her new secretary, Davison, to endeavour to gain Arran to her interests; and at the same time sent one Wotton, more particularly addressed to the young King. Davison soon succeeded in drawing on a conference between Arran and Lord Hunsdon on the Borders; the result of which was, an engagement, on the part of the Scottish minister, to keep the King unmarried for three years. Wotton played his part with equal dexterity. It was his duty to place himself in that relation to the Scotch monarch which Lennox had lately enjoyed—to amuse him with courtly stories, to join him in his sports, and take every other means of gaining his favour by amusing his senses. The unsuspecting good nature of James permitted the English courtier to be very successful in this strange employment.

At this period, three ambassadors arrived with a grand equipment from Denmark, giving out, as their ostensible object, that they were commissioned by their King to make some demands upon James regarding the sovereignty of the islands of Orkney and Shetland, but, in reality, to sound the way for a marriage between James and one of the young princesses of that country. There was something amusing in the treatment which these

gentlemen experienced amidst the tempestuous politics of Scotland. James himself wished to give them an honourable reception, and to entertain them, according to the general custom, at his own expense, so long as they should remain in his country. But the Earl of Arran took effectual means to counteract all his wishes. Being directed to remove from Dunfermline, where they had been introduced to the King, to St Andrews, and to wait there for their answer, previous to re-embarking for their own country, James informed them, that he should allow them the use of his own horses for their journey. Upon that assurance, they sent away their baggage and servants by other conveyances, and were ready booted for mounting the King's horses, which were promised at a particular hour, when Arran interfered, to prevent their receiving that piece of royal courtesy. Finding that they were insulted, they set forward from Dunfermline on foot, expressing no little indignation at their treatment. The King soon learned what had taken place, and endeavoured to repair the effect of Arran's insolence, by sending the horses after them; yet they justly esteemed themselves as used in a manner quite contrary to the customs of all civilized nations. When they reached St Andrews, they were delayed from day to day with promises of a speedy dispatch to their business; and during the interval, Arran employed his creatures to make them objects of public ridicule whenever they appeared abroad. Wotton also, under the pretence of friendship, took occasion to inflame them with reports of contemptuous language which he professed to have heard the King use regarding them and their country. They were at last so com-

pletely incensed, that they threatened to go to their ships, without waiting for the King's answer to their master's message, which would have inevitably occasioned a war between Denmark and Scotland. Fortunately, Sir James Melville prevailed upon them to stay, till, having prompted the King to give them some more respectful treatment, and an agreeable reply to their embassy, they at last quitted Scotland with minds somewhat less exasperated, and not altogether convinced that it was exclusively the residence of barbarians.

It was at this period that the Master of Gray first took part in the troubled scenes of the Scottish court. He had been originally what was called a practising Papist—that is, an enterpriser in the great and hazardous schemes which the Catholics of that age were constantly busied with for the restoration of their religion in Britain. He seems to have been gifted by nature and education with all the craft necessary for carrying on so dangerous a profession. He was first recommended to James, by the address with which he managed some correspondence between him and his mother. Arran, who was at first his friend, soon became alarmed at the progress he made in the King's favour, and endeavoured to ruin him by sending him to Elizabeth, on an embassy which it was scarcely possible for him to accomplish with success. Gray, however, contrived not only to escape the dangers which attended his mission, but also to form a conspiracy with the banished Lords, whom he met in England, for the overthrow of Arran. There was now the strongest reason for expecting success to any attempt of this nature. Arran had never before been so universally detested as he now was.

His enemies had never before entertained so consistent a purpose against him. And Elizabeth, having discovered the insecurity of any bargain with so unprincipled a man, was, at the present juncture, disposed to favour a scheme which promised to throw James into the hands of her own assured minions, the Protestant nobility.

The conspiracy was matured towards the close of the year 1585; and, assuredly, the way in which it was conducted, is calculated to give a most romantic view of the manners of that age. The whole object, be it remarked, was what would now be called a change of ministry. In addition, however, to the exquisite political chicanery which would be employed at the present day in accomplishing such an object, we find in this case vassals secretly assembled, knapsacks privately bur-nished up, swords sharpened, and towns and castles rendered fit to hold out against a lengthened siege. Among other matters of this sort, it is not a little amusing to find the Border clans, so remarkable for their indifference to the laws of *meum* and *tuum*, mustered to take an active hand in what was effectually a matter of law and civil polity.

The Master of Gray was much assisted in his arrangements, after returning to Scotland, by Sir Lewis Bellenden, Lord Justice-Clerk, and Sir John Maitland, the Secretary, both of whom regarded Arran with intense, though well disguised hatred. The whole machinations, both in Scotland and England, were conducted with admirable secrecy. Gray, having resolved to muster his own vassals, retired to Fife and Perthshire for that purpose, giving out that he designed only to march

against Lord Maxwell on a matter of police, that nobleman having lately excited the King's displeasure by an attack on the Laird of Johnston. Unfortunately, something transpired to give Arran a suspicion of his intentions; and he was immediately summoned to court. This was an extremely perplexing affair; for if he should obey the summons, he was apt to be seized, while, on the other hand, the general scheme was not sufficiently mature to justify his bidding it open defiance. He resolved, however, to obey it. Riding to Stirling, where the court was then held, he had an audience of the King, during which he completely succeeded in vindicating himself from Arran's suspicions. The favourite was so much incensed at this, as to resolve upon stabbing the Master in James's presence, or at least within the castle. But Gray contrived to remain at court till the event of the conspiracy, without thus becoming the victim of his enemy's resentment.

James was at Hamilton, enjoying the sport of hawking, when he was informed that the banished nobles were at the frontiers of the kingdom, attended by a body of English and Borderers, with which they were resolved immediately to advance against him. He lost no time in retiring to Stirling, which had recently been fortified, castle and town, for his defence, or rather for that of his minion. The personages chiefly concerned in this attempt were the Earl of Mar and the Master of Glamis, two of those who had acted in the Ruthven conspiracy, and who had since chiefly remained in England; the Earl of Angus, who had joined these two in their late ineffectual attempt upon Stirling; the Lords Claud and John Hamilton,

who had been forfeited and banished by Morton, for quite an opposite sort of treason, that of befriending Queen Mary, but whom a similarity of circumstances led to join the present plot; Lord Maxwell; the Earls of Bothwell and Athole; and the Lairds of Tullibardine, Buccleuch, Cessford, Cowdenknows, and Drumlanrig.

It is curious to observe the variety of reasons which the different members of this confederacy had for being in hostile array against the King. The general object was professedly the patriotic one of driving an evil counsellor out of the King's presence, and establishing a popular government. There could not, however, be the least uniformity of purpose between the Hamiltons, loyal to Queen Mary, and the Earls of Mar and Athole, the early friends of James. It is inconceivable, that the Earl of Bothwell (the King's cousin by descent from an illegitimate son of James V.) had any other reason for his appearance in arms, than the simple one, love of a fray or that strange turbulence of disposition by which he was characterized. But the strangest exception from the general purpose was in Lord Maxwell. He had recently had a dreadful feud with his local foe the Laird of Johnston, and had caused that gentleman's house of Lochwood to be burnt, purely, as was said in derision, to let the lady of the mansion "have light to set her hood [perform her toilette] in the morning." His object in joining the present expedition—which he did with three hundred foot and seven hundred horse—was merely to force a pardon from the King for that and other such misdeeds.

But, however discordant the real motives of the conspirators, they had sufficient prudence to work

unanimously towards one conclusion. As they advanced, they published a declaration of their intentions, the chief of which were, to defend what they styled the true religion, to deliver the King from corrupt counsellors, and to preserve amity with England. How Lord Maxwell, with his Catholic vassals, consented to this edict, it is difficult to conceive; but certain it is, his Protestant associates made little scruple to take advantage of his company, going as he was on the same errand with themselves. They were only a little scandalized at his giving out the watch-word of "St Andrew" to the army on the night when they lay at Falkirk. Such was the good effect of their declaration in stirring up the people in their favour, that on reaching St Ninians, within a mile of Stirling, they had an army of about ten thousand men, while Arran could only garrison Stirling with a small band of mercenaries, and the adherents of the Earls of Crawford and Montrose, two noblemen who adhered to him on account of his protecting them from certain criminal prosecutions.

During the night betwixt the last of October and the first of November, Arran, Montrose, and Crawford, kept an anxious watch upon the walls. Early in the morning, by a preconcerted design, the confederated army advanced upon the town in three detachments, two of which were to make feigned attacks on different parts of the walls to attract the attention of the besieged, while the third poured its force upon one of the gates, which was considered a weak point. An entrance being soon gained in this manner, little remained to do but to disperse the terror-struck bands of the besieged. Arran no sooner saw the enemy make

entrance, than, giving all up for lost, he galloped out of the town by the opposite side ; crossed the Forth by the bridge, the gate of which he locked behind him, throwing the keys into the river ; and fled northward, almost unattended. The Earls of Montrose and Crawford, with others of his friends, then retired into the castle, to take refuge with the King. Arran's brother, William Stewart, endeavoured for a while to contend the streets with the assailants, but was soon compelled to yield. His obstinacy had only the effect of causing some of the troops of the confederates to be wounded by their own companions ; for, strange to say, the Scotch harquebussiers were so awkward in their mode of fighting, as to fire indiscriminately, it would appear, on friend and foe. One of their leaders, on being told that some had fallen in this way, coolly remarked, that, if these unfortunate persons had known his troop as well as he did, they would have taken care how they went before it. But, upon the whole, wonderfully little blood was shed in achieving this important revolution of the Scottish cabinet. One Hamilton of Inchmachan, who had lately sworn away the lives of Cunningham of Drumquassel and Douglas of Mains, was seized as he was attempting to escape over the walls of the castle, and slain in cold blood by Johnston of Westerhall. But even this man's chief, Lord Hamilton, acknowledged that he had got nothing more than he deserved. Perhaps the only circumstance which disgraced the enterprise, was the conduct of the borderers. These gentlemen lost not a moment after they had gained possession of the town, in breaking open the shops, houses, and stables, which they rifled of every thing of value.

In the performance of this task, it was matter of amazement to all, how quickly they wrenched aside the stauncheons which the habitual caution of the Stirling merchants had interposed between them and their prey. However, they did not enrich themselves very much with what they got in the booths of Stirling, this being a town, says Spottiswoode, 'not very rich in merchandise.' They received their principal gratification from the stables, in which they found a great number of horses, the property of the courtiers. Upon these they immediately galloped away towards their own country.

Having secured the town, the enterprisers advanced to the front of the castle, where they planted their banners. They knew that the King would not be able to hold out long against them, for the castle at this time was quite unprovided for defence, and was not furnished with provisions for above one day. Accordingly, they next morning received a message from the King, by their friends the Secretary Maitland and Justice-Clerk Bellenden, requesting assurances for a parley. Having granted this, they were soon honoured with a formal embassy in the person of the Master of Gray, who professed to demand what they wanted in thus appearing in arms before their sovereign. After a conference which lasted an hour, Gray retired with a report of their wishes, which, as may be supposed, was presented in terms abundantly favourable. The King was still unwilling to submit; for, although he perhaps had no sincere affection for Arran, he regarded these his enemies with a degree of fear. He sent out a new message, importing that, if they sought only life, land, and goods, he

would willingly grant them their request, provided that they instantly dispersed. To this, however, they would not yield. Nor would they agree to a proposal which James then offered to them, for guaranteeing the lives of his late counsellors. He was at last obliged, by want of victuals, to submit without any terms whatever.

The gates being then opened, the lords were admitted to see the King, before whom they at once fell down upon their knees, and solicited pardon for their enterprise. James at first talked very big, called them traitors, and seemed as if about to order them to the gibbet. This, however, was only to maintain the theory of his dignity. He soon assumed a calmer tone. In respect, he said, of their misfortunes, and in hope of their better behaviour for the future, he would remit their offences; the more so, that their proceedings had been marked by little bloodshed. To Lord Hamilton, who was their spokesman, in consideration of his blood, he talked with peculiar kindness. "My lord," he said, "I did never see you before, and must confess that of all this company you have been most wronged. You were a faithful servant to the Queen my mother in the time of my minority, and were then, when I understood not as I now do the estate of things, hardly used." [James, it must be understood, always favoured those who had fought for his mother, more than those who had fought for himself, not perhaps from affection for her, but that he thought them the best friends to monarchy in general. He confesses, in his *Basilicon Doron*, that he ever found the former his best friends after he grew up.] "The rest of you," he continued, "who have been since that

time exiled, and put from your livings, cannot say but it was your own fault. But," turning himself to Bothwell, "What should have moved thee, Francis, to take this course, and come in arms against me? Did I ever do thee any wrong? or what cause hadst thou to offend? I wish thee a more quiet spirit, and that thou mayst learn to live as a subject; otherwise thou shalt fall in trouble."

Some attempted to explain more fully the reasons which had induced them to take this violent course with his Majesty. But he interrupted them. "There is no need of words," said he; "weapons have already spoken well enough. I am satisfied, as I think you did not mean harm to my person, to give you all both my hand and my heart; and I will remember nothing that is past, provided you carry yourselves henceforth as becomes men of your places, and behave yourselves as dutiful subjects." Having said so much to vindicate the integrity of his kingly prerogative, he permitted them to rise and kiss his hand. The Earl of Arran was then proclaimed traitor at the Cross of Stirling; the Earls of Montrose and Crawford were put under confinement in the charge of Lord Hamilton; and the king's guard was entirely changed. Afterwards, a formal pardon was granted to the lords, who, of course, became James's new counsellors. In a Parliament which was held at Linlithgow on the 4th of December, this remission was confirmed, and at the same time a reversion of their attainders was granted, including that of the late Earl of Gowrie. Along with the lords thus restored, were restored those ministers who had fled from the violence of Arran's government to England.

Thus ended the Raid of Stirling, an event of immense importance to King James, because it finally rescued him from the evil counsellors who beset his youth, and secured his government upon that good understanding with England, and that general moderation of principle, which were necessary for attracting to his person the affections of the great people whom he was destined to govern. After this, the country seems to have remained for a considerable time in a state of tranquillity, and even happiness, except so far as it was disturbed by the demands of the clergy, which were much too exorbitant to be at once granted, even after their friends had become the chief counsellors around the King. This matter, however, was at length settled in such a way as to make them comparatively peaceful.

The reader, perhaps, may desire to know the final fate of Arran. It was sufficiently in unison with the reckless nature of his life. For two years he lived in perfect seclusion among his friends in the wilder parts of Ayrshire, his style reduced from that of Earl of Arran to his original title of Captain James Stewart, for the peerage was restored to its proper owners, the Hamiltons, immediately after the affair of Stirling. At length, in 1587, the success which his brother met with in impeaching the Master of Gray, induced him to send a letter to the King, charging Maitland, his successor in the King's favour, with high crimes and misdemeanours; which attempt, however, met with no success; for, being ordered to enter into ward at Linlithgow Palace, to wait the result of Maitland's trial, with the prospect of being himself impeached as a sower of sedition, in

case of his charges being disproved, he thought proper to withhold himself from so dangerous an experiment. After this he was obliged to seek a more remote and secure place of refuge, Bewly in Rosshire, where his wife had a few friends, and a small piece of property. In 1596, when the death of Maitland, and an imprudent act on the part of the clergy, seemed to open a new prospect to him, he once more approached the King, with whom he had a long conference at Holyroodhouse. James was still disposed to befriend him; but till a proper opportunity of advancing him should occur, it was thought expedient that he should retire to the strongholds of his friends in Ayrshire. He accordingly repaired, with a small party, towards that district of country. As he was passing the village of Symington in Lanarkshire, a friend told him that it would be prudent for him to ride a little less ostentatiously, as James Douglas of Torthorwald, nephew to the late Morton, lived in the immediate neighbourhood, and was still inclined to be avenged of his uncle's death, which Stewart was known to have chiefly promoted. He replied, that he would not leave his road, or assume a disguise, for him, nor for any of the name of Douglas. But he soon found occasion to repent of his rashness. His words being reported to Torthorwald, that proud baron immediately took horse, and pursued him with three servants. Stewart was riding through the curious artificial-looking pass of Catslack, which communicates between Clydesdale and Ayrshire, when, looking back, he espied Torthorwald riding after him full speed. He immediately inquired the name of the strange place in which he was. Being informed it was Catslack, he hurried on

with evident trepidation, and gave orders to his retainers to follow as fast as they could; for he had received a response from witches in his days of power to beware of a cat, and he now judged from the name of the pass, that the dangerous moment had approached. His retainers, perhaps aware of this, and therefore despairing of any efforts they might make to defend him, abandoned him to his fate. He was immediately overtaken, tumbled from his horse, and killed by the avenging hand of Douglas. His body being then dragged aside, his head was taken off, and carried away by Torthorwald, while the carcass, thrown into a ditch, was left to be eaten up by dogs and swine. His head was fixed upon a spear, and planted on the walls of Torthorwald Castle, in Dumfriesshire, to the fulfilment, as the superstitious of that day failed not to remark, of another witch's prophecy, which promised that his head should be exalted above those of all the men of his time.

No legal cognizance was ever taken of his slaughter. He was esteemed a sort of moral outcast, quite unworthy of the notice of the laws.

It is necessary here to resort to some circumstances connected with the domestic life of James, which have been omitted in order to preserve the political narrative unbroken. In September 1582, when under the restraint of the Ruthven conspirators, he lost his tutor Buchanan. A certain stain seems to lie on the memory of James, at least in the estimation of some writers, for his never having expressed what they think a sufficient degree of reverence for so distinguished a preceptor, and for his having permitted the body of his old master, who died poor, to be buried at the ex-

pense of the city of Edinburgh. The gratitude of James to Buchanan, ought, according to these writers, to have been boundless, and should have regarded no check which the manners or the political prejudices of the man might have imposed upon it. Surely, however, those who think so, do not measure James's character by the ordinary standard of human nature. Buchanan, in his relation to James, was not a teacher chosen by a pupil from a preference on the part of the said pupil, but a stern governor and task-master, imposed upon him by a party without regard to his own eventual or probable wishes. James had every abstract reason, from the general circumstances of the case, not to speak of those which depended on the individual character of the master, for beholding him with aversion. It is needless to expatiate on these reasons—the malign feeling which the stoic cherished regarding his mother—his intimacy with all who had fought against the royal family—the nature and origin of the commission he had over his pupil, or his inflexible severity of temper—James must have been more than an angel, or less than a man, if he had ever been thoroughly reconciled to such a person. As for the charge regarding Buchanan's poverty and his eleemosynary funeral, that may be best answered by pointing to the list of lucrative offices and endowments which he enjoyed during life, and by reminding the reader that, at the time of his death, James was in confinement, and unable to exhibit any mark of respect for his corpse.

Some light is cast on this matter by James's own writings. Among the instructions which he gives to his son in the Basilicon Doron, he directs

him to consider the propagation of calumnies regarding his parents and ancestors, as among the offences which he should scarcely pardon; evidently an allusion to his own feelings in regard to Buchanan's history. At another place, where he recommends to his son a careful study of the history of his own country, he anxiously says, "I mean not such infamous invectives as Buchanan and Knox's Chronicles; if any of which remain to your days, use the law upon the keepers thereof; for in that point I would have you a Pythagorist, and think that the very spirits of these archibellouses of rebellion have made transition into them that hoard their works or maintain their opinions, punishing them even as it were their authors risen again." Indeed, convinced as the King must have been of his mother's innocence, he would have been the most contemptible slave on earth, if he could have ever entertained a sincere friendship for the man who had so ungratefully, so unprovokedly, and so wickedly traduced her.

In 1584, when eighteen years of age, the King made his first appearance as an author. His work was a small thin quarto, entitled, 'Essayes of a Prentice in the divine art of Poesie, with the Rewlis and Cautelis to be pursued and avoided.'

It consisted partly of poetry and partly of prose. The chief poems are a series of Sonnets to the Gods, in all probability the result of the King's exercises in versification under Buchanan. The prose part of the work is a code of laws for the construction of verse according to the ideas of that age. There is something odd enough in this association, the laying down of rules being rather

the proper business of an experienced master than of an apprentice. Yet, the whole work is respectable. The poetry, it is true, contains none of the hair-brained sentimental graces which we look for in modern verse, contains no striking descriptions of external nature, no treasures from the far recesses of thought, no forceful exhibitions of passion, no joyful or melancholy ponderings on the fate and character of man, such as we find in almost every thing now written under the name of poetry. 'There is no evidence,' says Mr Gillies, introducing a new edition of King James's Essays, 'that he ever loved or hated, rejoiced or suffered like a poet.' But the truth is, King James wrote according to the taste of his own age, not of the present. Judging his compositions by those of his contemporaries—the only way in which they ought to be judged—they appear very good. The poems of Montgomery, Hume, and others, whose names are preserved as the poetic ornaments of his Scottish court, are as unsuitable to the taste of the present generation as those of their royal patron. When the years of the writer are considered, they are entitled to be called wonderful. To write at eighteen, with a proper understanding of the selection and collocation of words, whether there be ideas at the same time or not, is no small merit. And such merit is surely to be allowed to the author of the following poem, which is found at the end of the poetical department of the book :

ANE SCHORT POEME OF TYME.

As I was pansing in a morning aire,
And could not sleip nor nawyis take me rest,

Furth for to walk, the morning was so faire,
Athort the fields, it seemed to me the best.
The East was cleare, whereby belyve I gest
That fyrie Titan cumming was in sight,
Obscuring chaste Diana by his light.

Who by his rising in the azure skyes,
Did dewlie helse all thame on earth do dwell.
The balmie dew through birning drouth he dryis,
Which made the soile to savour sweit and smell,
By dew that on the night before downe fell,
Which then was soukit up by the Delphienus heit.
Up in the aire : it was so light and weit.

Whose hie ascending in his purpoure chere
Provokit all from Morpheus to flee :
As beasts to feid, and birds to sing with beir,
Men to their labour, bissie as the bee :
Yet idle men devysing did I see,
How for to drive the tyme that did them irk,
By sindrie pastymes, quhile that it grew mirk.

Then woundred I to see them seik a wyle,
So willingly the precious tyme to tine :
And how they did themselfis so farr begyle,
To fushe of tyme, which of itself is fyne.
Fra tyme be past to call it backward syne
Is bot in vaine : therefore men sould be warr,
To sleuth the tyme that flees fra them so farr.

For what hath man bot tyme into this lyfe,
Which gives him dayis his God aright to know ?
Wherefore then sould we be at sic a stryfe,
So spedelie our selfis for to withdraw
Evin from the tyme, which is on nowayes slaw

To flie from us, suppose we fled it noght?
More wyse we were, if we the tyme had soght.

But sen that tyme is sic a precious thing,
I wald we sould bestow it into that
Which were most pleasour to our heavenly King.
Flee ydilteth, which is the greatest lat;
Bot sen that death to all is destinat,
Let us employ that tyme that God hath send us,
In doing weill, that good men may commend us.

CHAPTER IV.

THE KING'S CONDUCT REGARDING HIS MOTHER AT HER
EXECUTION.

1585—1587.

ONE of the most difficult and trying circumstances in James's early life, was his situation in regard to his mother—she a Catholic, a suspected murderess, a deposed and imprisoned queen, and he educated a Protestant, and forced, whether he would or not, to be the usurper of her throne. Separated from her at the age of ten months, and living ever since under the charge of her enemies, it was impossible that he could feel towards her the ordinary sensations of a son in regard to a mother: he could entertain no warmer feeling on the subject, than one of vague respect for a personage who, he was told, had brought him into the world, and whom one of the commandments enjoined him to reverence; a sentiment too general, and too much the effect of a mere idea of duty, to approach to filial affection.

No intercourse whatever took place betwixt James and his mother till he fell under the control of his favourites. A messenger who came to Stirling Castle during Morton's period of power,

bearing presents from Mary, and a letter addressed to the *Prince of Scotland*, was turned back without being permitted to approach the King. Lennox and Arran induced him afterwards to enter into a negotiation with her, for associating her in the government with himself; which scheme, although adverse to the Protestant interests, was by no means without its merits, since it would probably have pacified the Catholic part of the British population, and checked the dangerous machinations of those continental princes who were so perpetually plotting against Queen Elizabeth for the restoration of Mary. But the Raid of Stirling, which put him into the hands of a thoroughly Protestant nobility, rendered it impossible for James any longer to remain on friendly terms with his mother. Soon after that event, June 1586, he was induced to enter into a league, offensive and defensive, with Elizabeth, whereby he bound himself to assist her in defending the British isle from the threatened invasions of the French and Spaniards, and to assist her in resenting any injury which might be offered to her by certain persons, among whom his mother was included by implication; the secret reward for such a sweeping compliance being a pension of five thousand pounds a year, presented under the light of a compensation for the English estate of the Countess of Lennox, his paternal grandmother, but with a hint that it was the proper allowance for the heir of the English crown. James was at once compelled and tempted to throw himself into the Protestant scale against his mother, and did some things which it is to be wished, for his honour as a man, he had not done. He pardoned—he even gave

countenance and employment to a churchman named Archibald Douglas, who was known to have been concerned in his father's death. He also wrote a letter to his mother, in which he positively refused to acknowledge her to be Queen of Scotland, and disclaimed having any community of interests with her. No doubt, both of these actions were matters of political necessity, and were done for the purpose of promoting the interests of the Reformation, in opposition to the Catholics. But, on the other hand, it is precisely these things, and such as these, which supply the Catholics with counter charges of cruelty and want of principle against the Protestants, and which tend so much to place both dogmas on a level, in the eyes of the unprejudiced, in regard to their comparative influence over human conduct.

James's disrespectful letter occasioned a pang in Mary's bosom, such as her worst misfortunes, perhaps, had failed to inflict. She, of course, had greater reason to regard him with maternal tenderness, than he had to regard her with filial respect. Her bosom must have remembered the pressure of his infant form, while he, never having had perception of her embraces, could have no similar reason for recalling her image with emotions of tenderness. She felt his unkindness with the acutest pain. 'Was it for this,' said she, in a letter to the French ambassador, written with that elegance, fluency, and force of expression, peculiar to her, and which place her compositions a-head of all English prose literature before the time of Bolingbroke; 'was it for this that I have endured so much, in order to preserve to him the inheritance to which I have a just right? I am far from

envying his authority in Scotland. I desire no power there ; nor wish to set my foot in that kingdom, if it were not for the pleasure of once embracing a son whom I have hitherto loved with tender affection. Whatever he either enjoys or expects, he derived it from me. From him I never received assistance, supply, or benefit of any kind. Let not my allies treat him any longer as a king : he holds that dignity by my consent ; and if a speedy repentance do not appease my just resentment, I will load him with a parent's curse, and surrender my crown, with all my pretensions, to one who will receive them with gratitude, and defend them with vigour.'

It is believed to be probable, that she proceeded some length with a design of putting this threat into execution, and that she was eventually prevented from doing so by learning, that James had only acted from a necessity which he could not well control.

The time was now approaching, when this eminent person was to complete the extraordinary measure of her misfortunes by a violent death. The exertions which her Catholic friends had made in her favour ever since her imprisonment, and the threats which, both in their national and individual capacities, they had fulminated against her oppressor Elizabeth, were the causes of this lamentable catastrophe. Her existence at last seemed incompatible with that of the Protestant religion in Britain ; for it was perceived that, so long as she lived, the enemies of the Reformation would never want a rallying-point and a watch-cry. At this very juncture, Spain was mustering her formidable *Armada*, with the certain purpose of in-

vading Britain, and exterminating the Protestant faith. Is it to be allowed, said the English, that the existence of our sovereign, our government, and our religion, should be endangered by one person, whom we have it in our power to destroy? The *fairness* which so conspicuously characterizes the English mind, might have disposed them to question the propriety of sacrificing an innocent person, and a stranger who had fled to them for refuge, to even so violent a cause of expediency as this; but there are two cases in which the English have never been able to think with their habitual generosity—their commerce and their religion. In these matters they have hitherto been so utterly selfish and exclusive, as to render their national character highly anomalous in the eyes of foreigners, and even of Scotsmen.

In compliance with the wishes of the nation, but much more in compliance with her own malignant passions, Elizabeth consented to tarnish the glory of her reign by putting Mary to death. With an express and far-casting view to this event, she had procured, in 1585, an act of Parliament empowering her to try, and pursue to death, any person who should thenceforth be either the *cause* or the *object* of a plot against her. Thus she rendered Mary liable not only for her own crimes, but also for those of others—for the guilt of any rash individual who, of his own will, might choose to act in her favour against Elizabeth. This being made law, it was easy for the English ministers to cause a few headstrong young men, the chief of whom was the noted Anthony Babington, to engage in a conspiracy against her. They were seized and executed. Mary was then accused of

accession to their crime ; and, as all exculpatory evidence had been destroyed with the conspirators, no difficulty was found in condemning her. The sentence passed upon her was warmly approved by Parliament, and by the English nation at large ; and Elizabeth was importuned on all hands to consent to her execution. For a long time she hesitated to sanction a deed so violent, so unexampled, and which might afterwards be esteemed so infamous. Not that she scrupled at the bare idea of destroying a kinswoman, or a fellow-creature ; but that she dreaded what loss in good name, or what more substantial evil, might accrue to herself, in consequence of such a deed. Her hesitation was that of the cool murderer, who only pauses to consider what mode of death will make least show upon the exterior of the corpse, or upon his own hands, and so be least apt to cause his own detection. She was willing that some one of the keepers of her victim should take the guilt off her hands by secret assassination. The Earl of Leicester, her favourite for the time, proposed this in open council ; and she herself gave broad but ineffectual hints to her agents to have it executed. That such an idea should have been entertained by this great princess, and thought fit for discussion at her council board, certainly gives a striking view of the barbarism which still clung to the best ranks of English society, not to speak of Scottish, at the end of the sixteenth century.

It was not James's interest to throw any obstacle in the way of his mother's execution. She was the rival of his title ; in the eyes of many of his subjects, she was the sovereign, and he an usurper. In the event of her escaping, and being

placed by the Catholics on the English throne, which was looked upon at that juncture as by no means impossible, he might calculate upon being disinherited for his Protestantism and his usurpation of Scotland, and even perhaps on being dispossessed of that northern monarchy. On the other hand, by her death, he was secured in enjoyment of the Scottish throne, Elizabeth in that of England; and an open course was left for his succeeding, in the fulness of years, to that enviable seat, which had been in a manner promised him by Elizabeth, on his signing the late treaty.

To place interest, however, in opposition to affection, in a case like this, was more than man could do. James, though practically unacquainted with the tender relation of parent and child, had a great reverence (which characterized him through life) for at least the image of his parents. He was also keenly alive to the horror, as well as the infamy, of having a near relation subjected to a public and ignominious death. He therefore made all the exertions which circumstances admitted of to prevent the catastrophe.

These exertions were necessarily of an awkward and constrained kind. Hampered as he was by his Protestant relations, by his Protestant court and clergy, himself in very deed existing by sufferance of the English queen, in what terms or manner was he to solicit that princess for the life of his mother? Had he now been in enjoyment of one of those intervals of absolute power which his favourites were able to procure for him, he might have perhaps written his petition on the skins of the warriors who guarded the north of England. But, bound down under the control

of an oligarchy, the members of which were the enemies of his mother and the minions of Elizabeth, how was he to proceed? Surrounded at Holyroodhouse rather by a guard than a court, what had he to advise with but his own solitary heart—what had he to send across the Border but the eloquence of its affections?

It was early in November 1586 that the news of Mary's trial and sentence reached Edinburgh. James immediately selected William Keith, a gentleman of his court, to carry a letter to Elizabeth, remonstrating against the proceedings. 'It would have seemed strange to him,' so ran this letter, 'if his nobility and counsellors had ever taken it upon them to give sentence upon a queen of England or one of its blood-royal, how much more strange, then, would it appear to him, if she (Elizabeth) should stain her hands with the blood of his mother, who was of the same royal condition with her self, the same sex, and her kinswoman! He could not bring himself to believe that it would ever enter her heart to do a thing so violent, so unnatural. But, if it should be so, then he desired her to consider how much it touched him in honour, as a king, and as a son, to permit his mother, an absolute prince, to be put to an infamous death.'

Elizabeth returned no answer to this letter; but, about the end of the month, Keith sent intelligence to Edinburgh, that notwithstanding his remonstrance, and that of a French ambassador, who had come to London for the same purpose, the death of Queen Mary was more certainly determined on in the English council than before. James instantly wrote a letter of instruction to

Keith, expressed in terms as much more sharp than his late epistle to Elizabeth, as the danger was now more imminent. * He at the same time called

* This letter is worthy of being now put into print, as going far to testify James's sincere desire of saving his mother. It is from Wodrow's MSS., Advocates' Library.

‘ I perceive by your last letters, the Queen, my mother, continueth still in that miserable streight that the pretended condemnation of that Parliament has put her in ; a strange example indeed, and so very rare, as for my part I never heard nor read of the like practice in such a case. I am sorry, that by my expectation the Queen hath suffered this to proceed so far to my dishonour, and so contrary to her good fame, as by subject's mouth to condemn a sovereign prince, descended of all hands of the best blood in Europe. King Henry the VIII.'s reputation was never prejudged in any thing, but in the beheading of his bed-fellow ; but yet that tragedy was far inferior to this, if it should proceed as it seemeth to be intended, which I can never believe, since I know it to be the nature of noble princes at that time chiefly to spare when it is most concluded in all mens' minds that they will strike : Always, I am presently upon the directing of a very honourable ambassade thither for the same purpose, in which commission shall be one man that the Queen will well like of, and who both hath and deserveth great credit at her hand ; and therefore fail not to insist with the Queen, that all farther may be stayed while (*till*) their arrival, which shall be as speedy as possibly they may post thither. This far I promise to myself will be granted, since I no way merit at that Queen's hands such hard usage as to disdain to hear my overture and reasons, which when she hath heard she may weigh as best pleaseth her. Fail not to let her see all this letter, and would to God she might see the inward parts of my heart, where she would see a great jewel of honesty towards her lockt up in a coffer of perplexity, she only having the key, which by her good behaviour in that case may open the same. Chuse ye in what streight my honour will be, this unhap being perfected—since, before God, I already dare skath go abroad for crying out of the whole people. And what is spoken by them of the Queen of England it grieves me to hear, and yet

a convention of the whole estates of his kingdom, to meet on the 15th of December, for the purpose of appointing regular ambassadors to treat with the queen for his mother's preservation.

Keith, on receiving the King's instructions, renewed his entreaty for a delay of the proceedings against Mary. But he found Elizabeth deaf to his request. He then showed her the terms on which James had desired his mind to be expressed to her, in case of her rejecting his petition. These terms were not very gentle. They denounced the deed which she contemplated, as against the laws of God, which prohibit all injury to his Anointed Ones, and as equally against the laws of nations, which protect a sovereign from being judged by subjects. They reminded her of the dangerous example which such a deed would place before the eyes of the European nations, already too much disposed, in consequence of the license given to public opinion by the Reformation, to question the unimpeachability of their sovereigns. They finally avowed the necessity under which he would lie, of taking such revenge for his mother's death, as comported with his feelings as a son, and his dignity as a king.

Elizabeth absolutely stormed at this bold remonstrance ; and, if her counsellors had not taken some pains to allay her rage, she would have turn-

dare not find fault with it, except I would dethrone myself, so is whole Scotland incensed with this matter. As ye love your master's honour, omit no diligence in this request. And let this letter serve for excuse to the Queen, my dearest sister, of my not writing to her at this time, in respect of this bearer's sudden departure. Farewell.

‘ JAMES R.’

ed the Scottish king's messenger from her presence, with insult instead of reply. When she had become somewhat calm, she said she would give no answer in anger, and would think of it till next morning. At the time specified, she told Keith "that no precipitation should be used; but she would wait till next time she should hear from the king; after which she hoped some arrangement might be made for saving the life of the Queen of Scots."

James was much pleased and mollified with this answer. Conceiving hopes that a gentle course would be effectual, he sent a second letter to the Queen, in which, after endeavouring to palliate the sharp terms of his instructions to Keith, and making every allowance for her Majesty's feelings and policy, he promised immediately to send ambassadors to treat with her regarding his mother.

At the convention, which met in the middle of December, he found his subjects much better disposed than he could have expected, to sympathize with him in his wish to preserve his mother. The truth is, though the Scotch still detested Mary as much as ever for her Catholicism and her suspected criminality, they felt a little offended at the idea of a member of their royal family being put to an unfair death by the English. They accordingly voted James a considerable sum to fit out his ambassadors.

The King having selected the Master of Gray and Sir Robert Melvill of Mordecairny, to serve him in this capacity, they left Edinburgh on the 20th of December, and reached London on the 30th. On the 1st of January, after some difficulties they were admitted to the presence of Elizabeth.

She at first received them with rudeness, alluded to the instructions given to Keith, and asked if they had been sent with the like threats. On their reminding her, however, of the apology which the King had made for those instructions, and informing her that theirs were of a different tenor, she broke forth into a speech full of amicable professions, intimating that she had agitated every sort of scheme for preserving the life of the Queen of Scots, but that, to her infinite sorrow, she found it could not be, consistently with her own safety and the good of her people. They replied, that the case was surely not so desperate but that they might hope to give her assurance for her life by other means. But, observing her anger to be excited by what they said, they were obliged to withdraw without entering more deeply into the object of their mission.

At their next audience, on the 10th of January, she began the conference, by saying, in her coquettish way, "A thing long looked for should be good when it comes—I would like to hear what your King offers." The Master of Gray answered, "No man makes offer, but for some cause; if it like your Majesty, we desire to know if the person be extant for whom we offer." [This was said in consequence of a rumour that the queen had already been put to death.] "*As yet,*" said Elizabeth, "*I think she be; but I will not promise an hour.*"

"Nay," said Gray, "we come not to shift, but to offer from our sovereign whatsoever in reason can be required—specially that he shall interpose his credit in behalf of his mother, and give the chief of his nobility for pledges, that no plot nor

practice shall be contrived against your Majesty with her knowledge or privity. If that be not sufficient, provided that it please your Majesty to set her at liberty, and send her into Scotland, a course shall be taken for securing your Majesty from all attempts on her account whatsoever."

Elizabeth, calling the Earl of Leicester and other Lords who were near her, repeated these offers to them, with expressions of contempt; which caused the Master of Gray to ask abruptly what could induce any man to plot against her Majesty in behalf of the Queen of Scots. She answered, that the Catholics would do so, because Mary was a papist, and they expected her to succeed to the throne. "And if these means be taken away," said the Master of Gray, "apparently the danger will cease." "That," said the Queen, "I would be glad to understand." The Master answered, That "if the right of succession were made over by Queen Mary to her son, which he believed she would do, then the Catholics would have no more hope, and there would be no more danger." "But she hath no right," said Elizabeth, "for she is declared incapable of succession." "If she have no right," replied Gray, "the hope of the papists is already at an end, and it is not to be feared that they will enterprise for her." "But the Papists," said Elizabeth, "do not allow our declaration." "Then let it fall," rejoined Gray, "in the King's person by her resignation."

The Earl of Leicester here objected, that Mary was a prisoner, and could not legally resign her title. The Master answered, that "the demission being made to her son, and with the advice of all her friends in Europe, in case by any attempt the

Queen (Elizabeth) were cut off, she would have none to partake with her against her son, all the princes her friends standing obliged that her resignation should be valid and effectual in his favour." But this ingenious reasoning bore too closely on the delicate point of the succession to be agreeable to Elizabeth. She affected not to understand what the Master meant; and Leicester explained it as proposing that James should come in his mother's place. "Is it so?" said the queen, "Then I put myself in worse case than before. By God's passion, [her usual oath], that were to cut my own throat, and for a duchy or an earldom to yourself, you or such as you would cause some of your desperate knaves kill me. Tell your King what I have done for him to keep the crown on his head since he was born, and that, for my part, I mind to keep the league that stands betwixt us; which, if he break, it shall be a double fault." With these words, she moved away. Sir Robert Melvill, following her, requested at least a respite of eight days for the unhappy queen. But her ear was deaf to entreaty, and she only uttered the emphatic sentence, "Not an hour."

When James was informed of this conference, and that nothing but extremity was to be expected, he wrote a letter with his own hand to the Master of Gray, commanding him to renew the threats which he had formerly conveyed in his instructions to William Keith. 'Reserve yourself na langer,' so proceeds this brief but earnest epistle; 'reserve yourself na langer in your dealing for my mother, for you have done it too long; and think not that any thing will do good if her life be lost; for then adieu with my dealing with theime that are the

special instruments thair of. Thairfore, if you look for the continuance of my favour towartis you, spare na pains nor plainnes in this cace, but read my letter wrettin to William Keith, and conform yourself quhollie to the contentis thair of; and in this requeist let me reap the fruicts of your great credit there, ather now or never.'

But Elizabeth knew too well the weakness of the Scottish monarch to be much affected by his threats. She also guessed, perhaps, that, however much natural affection, or an idea of moral duty, might agitate him at present, a sense of his own interest must subdue him into his wonted obedience, so soon as the first heat of his feelings should have gone off. In order to soften the blow as much as possible, she caused her minister, Leicester, to write an anonymous letter to the King, expressing the surprise which all the principal men in England, and throughout Protestant Europe in general, felt at his exertions in favour of his mother, whose life was so manifestly adverse to his own interests, as well as to those of the true religion. It is now also ascertained, that the Master of Gray, while assuring James, by frequent despatches, of the earnest zeal with which he laboured to mollify Elizabeth towards Mary, secretly urged her to the execution, reminding her of the proverb, that the dead cannot bite; and alleging that his master, in reality, was not sorry that his mother should be put out of the way.

It was no doubt in concert with this unworthy officer, that, in the latter part of January, she gave a contumelious dismissal to himself and his associate in embassy. As soon as James learned that they had been unsuccessful, and that the death

of his mother seemed to be sealed, he called back his ambassadors, and, as the last resource within his power, appointed a prayer to be said for her by the clergy. The form of this prayer was the simplest possible ;—‘ that it might please God to illuminate her with the light of his truth, and save her from the apparent danger wherein she was.’ Yet, because she was a Catholic, and because the Scottish clergy feared every thing in the shape of a set prayer, as tending to invade their precious privilege of ‘ moralizing on the time’ in their extempore effusions, they universally refused to perform this little office of humanity for a fellow-creature in unexampled distress ; at once insulting their sovereign and human nature. James, touched in his innermost heart by their unkindness, appointed Patrick Adamson, Archbishop of St Andrews, distinguished as one of the most learned scholars and best poets of his time, to preach on the 3d of February in the principal church of the capital, and to remember the Queen in his prayers. The King probably thought that he might at least have the appointed office performed in the church where he himself usually sat ; yet, even in this object, an attempt was made by the clergy to disappoint him.

There was something ludicrous in the scene which took place in the High Church, in consequence of this insolence ; at least, it appears ludicrous in the eyes of a different age. When the King entered his seat, he found the pulpit possessed, not by his complying friend the Archbishop, but by a pert young coxcomb of the name of Cowper, who was not yet invested with the orders of a clergyman, but who, according to the licentious

custom of the Scottish church in that age, was nevertheless permitted to exercise his functions, and even to take a part in the regular routine of duties, in the principal church of Edinburgh. Seeing that an insult was intended, but at the same time willing to avoid a collision with men whom he had so much reason to fear, James called out, "Master John [the usual way of designating a clergyman in his time], that place was destinat for another; you must come down." Cowper answered, that he had come prepared to preach, it being his ordinary day, and, if it were his Majesty's will, "he would fain do God's work." The King replied, "I will not hear you this day: I command you to come down, and let Mr Patrick Adamson come up and preach." Still Cowper parlied for permission to remain where he was, till at last the King good-naturedly said, that, since he was there, he might go on, provided he would obey the charge, and pray for his mother. To this Cowper replied, that he would do as the spirit of God should direct him; when James, well knowing what effects would result from such a pseudo-inspiration, peremptorily commanded him to descend. At that moment, the King's guard advancing to enforce his orders, Cowper gave a thump on the pulpit with his fist, and told the King that "that day should witness against him in the great day of the Lord." He then descended, exclaiming, in the true style of a Presbyterian seer of the time, "Woe be to thee, O Edinburgh, for the last of thy plagues shall be worse than the first." The people, who were in the habit of paying a sincere and senseless regard to every thing which fell from their preachers,

uttered a loud and universal howl at this denunciation, and rose up to leave the church along with their favourite divine. James was so indignant at their conduct, as to rise up and cry, "What devil ails the people, that they will not tarry to hear a man preach?" But they all went out, leaving only himself, his courtiers, and a few of the nobility and gentry. Adamson now got into the pulpit, and preached an eloquent, and at the same time most inoffensive discourse, from a text in Timothy enjoining Christians to pray for all men. When he was done, James was under the necessity of conveying him to the palace with his own guard, to save him from the vengeance of the multitude. Cowper, who had preached elsewhere to the crowd which left the church in his train, was that afternoon imprisoned, by order of the Privy Council, in Blackness; while two other ministers of Edinburgh, for insolent language used at his examination, were deposed temporarily from their offices. A more unhappy instance is not upon record, of the cheap boldness displayed by the early Scotch preachers; for here their war is not altogether against the authority of their sovereign, which forms a specious excuse for them in so many other instances, but against the best and most generally recognised of the natural affections.*

Elizabeth eventually managed the execution with a great deal of regard to the feelings of King James. She contrived, by her boggling and her juggling, to dissipate, as it were, the effects of

* Spottiswoode, 354.—Moyses, 115.—Row's History of the Church of Scotland, MS. Advocate's Library.—Calderwood, 214.

her cruelty over a considerable space of time. Mary was put to death by the blow of an instant; but, so far as her son was concerned, she might be said to have died gradually during several weeks. The bitter pill was dissolved in a large draught, and swallowed imperceptibly. James, though apprised of her doom for some time before the event, still entertained a lingering hope that Elizabeth would not proceed to the last extremities—that nature would at length get the better of her high political resolve. His ambassadors returned to Holyroodhouse on the 7th of February, the day before Mary's death: it was not till the 15th that even a rumour of the event reached him. On that day, an express came to his secretary from Ker of Cessford, warden of the Borders, informing him that Sir John Forster, the opposite English warden, had just communicated intelligence of the Queen's death. At first, the fact seemed to him so imperfectly vouched, that, on the 17th, he did not scruple to go to the hunting at Calder. There intelligence reached him, that Mr Cary, youngest son of Lord Hunsdon, and a kinsman of Elizabeth, was coming to Scotland; which circumstance, connected with the information brought by his ambassadors that the English Queen was to send him such a person to convince him of the propriety of sacrificing his mother, induced him to believe that there was more probability in Cessford's message than he at first allowed to it. He therefore, on the 20th, sent Mr George Young, his secretary-depute, to Berwick, to inquire of the ambassador if the news were true—to allow him to enter Scotland, if false; but, if true, to bid him enter at his peril. Young

returned on the 23d with a confirmation of the report, which gave James the most acute pain. ‘It put his Majesty,’ says a simple chronicler of passing events, * ‘into a very great grief and displeasure, so that he went to bed that night without supper, and on the morrow by seven o’clock went to Dalkeith, there to remain solitary.’ We are informed by Camden, in his *Annales of Elizabeth*, that he spent many subsequent nights in tears. Another minute annalist says, that his Majesty ‘investit himself with a *duil weed of purple* for certayne dayis;’ † that is, a suit of mourning made of purple. The whole court followed this example, except the Earl of Argyle, who appeared in a suit of armour, hinting that he conceived *that* the proper fashion of mourning in which the nation should bewail the murder of their late sovereign.

It is a touching circumstance, that affection for her son was among the last sentiments expressed by Mary when about to part from the world. According to the narrative of her execution drawn up by the Earls of Shrewsbury and Kent, who attended her, she paused at a landing-place in the stair, as she was descending to the fatal hall of Fotheringay, and said to the master of her household, “Melvil, as thou hast been an honest servant to me, so I pray thee continue to my son, and commend me to him. I have not impugned his religion, nor the religion of others, but wish him well. And, as I forgive all that have offended me in Scotland, so I would that he should also; and beseech God that

* David Moyses, an officer of the King’s household.

† History of King James the Sext.

he would send him his holy spirit, and illuminate him." Moreover, in her last brief prayer before the block, she entreated God "to be merciful to her son."

A good deal of indignation was expressed in Scotland when the intelligence of her death became generally known. It was a custom of that time to express public sentiments, which could not otherwise be published, by the clandestine plan of affixing pasquils, by night, to the doors of the courtiers. Numbers of these were displayed on the streets of Edinburgh, urging the King and council to revenge Mary's death. But this feeling was far from being general. It was indeed almost exclusively confined to the relics of the Queen's faction, and to the favourers of the French interest. The greater part of the people, prejudiced against Mary, on account of her religion and the dubious circumstances of her history, accustomed also by their clergy to regard every thing done by Elizabeth with respect, heard of her murder without resentment.

Whatever really were the feelings of the King, it was totally out of his power to take any measures for their proper expression. Had he attempted to levy an army for the invasion of England, as his less considerate advisers would have done, it is not probable that he would have raised half the number of men which Lord Scroop had now ready to oppose him, in case of such a proceeding, on the south-western border. He had not even a minister who was inclined to revenge: Maitland, his chief adviser, was decidedly adverse to a breach with Elizabeth. It is also a strong fact in his favour, that many of his nobility secretly sent letters to

Elizabeth, urging her to the execution. * He has himself drawn up a paper of reasons why 'he was unable to revenge the heinous murder, committed against his dearest mother, by the old enemies of my progenitors, realm and nation : First, in respect of my tender youth, [he was twenty and a half,] not trained up in dexterity of arms, either to withstand injury, or to conquer my own right, being at all times bygone *detained in captivity* : Next, my excessive want, being obliged to live from hand to hand ; having sufficient patrimony and casualty, without any thing in store : Then, the divers factions of spiritual and temporal estates ; every one regarding himself, and not me. '

It now turned out that the English emissary who was detained at Berwick, had not been sent to convince the King, as his ambassadors announced, of the *propriety* of having his mother put out of the way, but for the very different purpose of excusing Elizabeth from all blame in so *unhappy* and so *odious* a transaction. When this gentleman found himself denied a passport into Scotland, he sent a letter to the King, expressive of the Queen's sorrow for what had taken place, and explaining away the whole matter as an *accident* ! Elizabeth, he said, had been prevailed upon, by the prayers of her council and people, to sign the Scottish Queen's sentence ; but it was only that they might not be unprovided with a weapon against the Catholics, foreign and domestic, in case of their rescuing her from Fotheringay Castle, as they threatened, and endeavouring to set her up as monarch of England. The secretary, Davison, to whom she intrust-

* Camden's Annales of Elizabeth.

ed the custody of the paper, carried it, by a flagrant misinterpretation of her wishes, to the council, who immediately despatched a commission to see it put into execution; 'which was done, she protested to God, before she knew it.' The secretary was committed to prison for his misdeeds, for which he should not escape her high displeasure. 'This,' concludes Cary, 'is the effect of my message; which, if I could express so lively as I did hear her utter it with a heavy heart and sorrowful countenance, I think your Majesty would rather pity the grief she endureth, than in any sort blame her for the fact whereunto she never gave consent.'

Cary also bore the following letter from Elizabeth herself—one of the most ingenious pieces of false feeling which even that exquisite dissembler ever penned:

'My Dear Brother; I would you knew, though not felt, the extreme dolor that overwhelmeth my mind for that miserable accident which, far contrary to my meaning, hath befallen. I have sent this kinsman of mine, whom ere now it hath pleased you to favour, to instruct you truly of that which is too irksome to my pen to tell you. I beseech you, that as God and many mo know how innocent I am in this case, so you will believe me, that, if I had done it, I would have abode by it. I am not so base-minded that the fear of any living creature should make me afraid to do what is just, or, done, to deny the same; I am not so degenerate, nor carry so vile a mind. But, as not to disguise fits most a king, so will I never dissemble my actions, but cause them show as I mean

them. This assure yourself for me, that, as I know it was well deserved if I had meant it, I would never lay it on another's shoulders ; and to impute to myself that which I did never so much as think of, I will not. The circumstances you will be pleased to hear of this bearer : And for my part, think you have not a more loving kinswoman and more dear friend, nor any that will watch more carefully to preserve you and your state. And if any would otherwise persuade you, think they bear more good will to others than to you. Thus, in haste, I leave to trouble you, beseeching God to send you a long reign.

‘ Your most assured loving sister and cousin,
ELIZABETH, R.’

Of course, few readers will require to be reminded, that the writer of this letter was herself the direct dictator of Mary's death, and that, if she had any hesitation whatever in the matter, it arose from an earnest wish that the unhappy Queen should be assassinated by some wretch, from an idea of good service, instead of being put to a ceremonious death by her warrant. ‘ Oh, tyger's heart within a woman's hide !’ as the old dramatist has prophetically expressed her character.

After the delivery of these letters, there was a meeting of English and Scotch commissioners at Foulden Kirk in the Merse, to adjust the terms of satisfaction to be rendered by Elizabeth to James for his mother's slaughter. And a scheme was agitated for a reparation of a tangible shape, such as was sometimes paid, according to a custom which prevailed in Scotland, by persons guilty of

homicide, to the nearest of kin of the deceased. But, in the course of a few weeks, the King permitted himself to be pacified, without any formal recognition of the injury he complained of. The death of Mary was a matter too necessary to the interests of all and sundry, himself included, to be very long resented ; and, all the circumstances considered, he might very well smother his desires of revenge, without incurring the charge of having been indifferent to the claims of blood.

CHAPTER V.

JAMES'S MARRIAGE—HIS ARRIVAL WITH THE QUEEN FROM
DENMARK—THEIR RECEPTION.

1589—1590.

THE next transaction in which James was engaged, was one of a much more pleasing nature. He now judged it time, since he approached his majority, to supply himself with a consort. There were many reasons for this resolution. He was the only individual of his family; the heir-presumptive to his Scottish crown was a lunatic, (the Earl of Arran); failing himself, the inheritance of the English crown was apt to be disputed by a number of claimants; and he knew that, if he had offspring, he would be less exposed than heretofore to assassination. He was moreover sensible, that the possession of a family of children must recommend him very warmly to the English people, and smooth his way to the throne. Elizabeth had long endeavoured to repress all desires of this kind in James, partly from a fear lest he should make an improper choice, and partly from anticipation of the favour and influence he should thus acquire among her people, to her own prejudice. But she now relaxed so much, as to recommend him to marry the sister of the King of

Navarre, afterwards Henry IV. of France, an alliance calculated to strengthen the Huguenot or Protestant interest in that kingdom against the Guise family and the King of Spain.

But, previous to introducing a Queen into his kingdom, he esteemed it necessary that the feuds which agitated it should be somewhat stilled. For this purpose, at a Convention of Estates, which was held at Edinburgh in May 1587, he exerted himself to abolish some of the causes of wrath which existed among his nobility. The Master of Glamis, for instance, and the Earl of Crawford, had long been inflamed against each other; and the brother of the former had been shot by the servants of the latter, as he was passing along one of the streets of Stirling, only ten years before. The Earl of Angus entertained a vehement grudge against the Earl of Montrose, chiefly because Montrose had sat as chancellor on the jury which condemned Angus's uncle, the Earl of Morton; for in that age, as justice could only be obtained by force, so was its stroke looked upon by the sufferers as a matter no less to be avenged than an ordinary private injury—and all this notwithstanding that Angus was a zealous religionist, even so much so as to be styled by James, for his friendliness to the Church, *the Ministers' King*. All these persons being assembled at the Convention, and every exertion having been there made by the King and his chancellor Maitland to adjust their disputes, James invited them privately to a banquet in Holyroodhouse, on a Sunday afternoon, placed them promiscuously at a large table, drank to them three several times, commanded them to live henceforth in peace and concord, and vowed to be a mortal

enemy to him who first should commit violence against another. We know not what success he met with on this first evening; but next night, when the banquet was repeated, the reconciliation of the nobles was solemnized by a social ceremony, which placed it beyond a question. After supper, when they had probably been mollified to a certain degree by liquor, the whole sallied out of the palace into the streets of the neighbouring city, exactly in the guise in which they had sat at table—that is, without sword and doublet, and, ranging themselves into a column, walked hand in hand to the market-cross, the King at their head, supported by his kinsman Hamilton, and they themselves each side by side with the particular individual against whom he had lately borne the most deadly hostility. So strange a procession attracted an immense crowd; and it was not without feelings of the highest gratification that the peaceable citizens beheld a scene which seemed to betoken a conclusion to all civil war in the country. The magistrates, according to the report of one of their fellow-citizens, went in advance of the procession, dancing for very joy. The prisoners for debt were liberated from jail; the Cross was hung with tapestry, and planted with trumpeters and singers; the gibbets, which had stood there for years, to execute the numerous victims of civil discord, were hewed down and burnt; and a long table being placed upon the street, the King and the nobles sat down and partook of a civic banquet; while every window and outer stair in the neighbourhood displayed a similar scene of feasting and social joy. After all the individuals formerly at feud had publicly shaken hands with each other,

and drunk to each other's health, the whole returned in similar order to the palace, amidst music, the firing of cannon, and the blessings of a people which seemed absolutely transported with joy.

James, with the advice of his Parliament, now despatched ambassadors to the court of Frederick II., King of Denmark, to make proposals regarding a marriage with his eldest daughter. Elizabeth was averse from this match, and thought that the sister of the King of Navarre would be preferable, though, even with her, she wished James to delay any alliance for three years. Altogether, it is probable that he would not have achieved a marriage at all, adverse as Elizabeth was to such a measure, but for the Spanish Armada, which sailed next year against her kingdom, and which caused her to allow James this gratification, as part of the price of his steadfastness in her interest during a time of such danger.

James's behaviour throughout the year eighty-eight was spirited, and all that Elizabeth could wish. He undertook various little expeditions against such of his Catholic subjects as had gone into arms with a view of assisting the Spanish invaders; and, when informed by the English ambassador that he was included in the threats which Philip gave out, he answered with a jest, that "he looked for no better favour than that which the Cyclops Polyphemus promised to Ulysses, to be the last devoured."

Yet all his good service could hardly purchase the permission he desired to marry. Elizabeth, by means of the Chancellor Maitland, who was devoted to her, threw a thousand little obstacles in

the way. His envoys, by her exertions, were sent with such limited powers, that Frederick, judging himself insulted, gave his daughter to the Duke of Brunswick. Even when James had condescended to seek the second daughter, he came, for some time, no better speed. Maitland crippled every embassy which he sent out. It was, at last, only by the humble expedient of spiriting up the trades of Edinburgh to raise a popular riot in favour of the marriage, that he prevailed upon his minister to countenance it. The Earl Marischal was then despatched with proposals which were judged reasonable by the Danish King ; * and in August 1589, the Princess Anne was married by proxy, and set sail for Scotland. She was at this time only fifteen years of age.

James, who had waited and laboured for his wife almost as long and as much as Jacob did for Leah, now expected that he was about to be gratified by her presence. To his great chagrin, a message, which arrived almost immediately after that which informed him of her departure for Scotland, gave him the unwelcome intelligence, that she had been driven back by contrary winds to the coast of Norway, where, in all probability, she should have to wait for fair weather till the next spring. This was too much for even James's sluggish nature. To be baulked by so adventitious a matter as the weather, after he had eluded the more serious difficulties presented by Elizabeth and Maitland, seemed exceedingly hard. He determined, by a violent personal exertion, to overcome

* Frederick II. was now dead, and the contract was negotiated with his son, Christian IV.

this unworthy obstacle. Without consulting any one, he conceived one day, while living at Craigmillar, the resolution of sailing to Upslo, the port where the Queen had taken refuge, and there solemnizing his nuptials. This, says Miss Aikin, was a sally so little to be anticipated from his timid and indolent temper, combined with his known indifference to female charms, that it appears to have perplexed not a little all to whom his character has furnished matter of speculation. But he had sufficient reasons for his conduct, both as to number and force ; and fortunately he has stated them himself.

‘ First of all,’ says James, in a declaration which he left behind him for the satisfaction of his subjects, and which forms a capital specimen at once of his style of composition in prose, and his simple familiar character ; ‘ I doubt nocht it is manifestlie knawne to all how far I was generally found fault with be all men for the delaying sa lang of my mariage. I wes allane, without fader or moder, bruthir or sistar, King of this realme, and air appeirand of England ; this my naikatnes maid me to be waik, and my inemyis stark ; ae man wes as na man, and the want of hoip of succession bread disdayne ; yea, my lang delay bred in the breistis of mony a grite jealousie of my inhabilitie, as gif I wer a barrane stok : Thir ressonis, and innumerable otheris hourly objected, moved me to haisten the treaty of my mariage ; for as to my awne nature, God is my witnes, I could have abstenit langair nor the weill of my patrie could have permitted. I am knawne, God be praised, not to be very intemperatly rashe nor concety in my wechtiest effairis ; nather use I to be sa caryed away

by passioun as I refuse to heir reasoun.' He then tells, that, having understood the Queen could not come to him, he resolved to go to her. 'The place that I resolvit this in wes Craigmillair, not ane of the haill counsale being present there; and as I tuke this resolutioun onlie of myselff, as I am a trew prince, sa advised I with myselff onlie quhat way to follow furth the same.' Then he tells that he assembled the council at Edinburgh, for the purpose of having ships prepared; but finding them difficulted as to the fitting out a sufficient number to be an honourable convoy for the King of Scotland, he 'wes compelled to avow with grite vehemencie, that, giff thay could be gottin na othir to gang, I suld ga myselff allane, *gif it were but in ane ship*: But giff all men (said I) had bene as weill willit as became thame, I neidit nocht be in that strait.' This reproach was designed for the Chancellor Maitland; and it stung him so, that he offered to accompany the King. James, however, consulted him no further till his departure; 'twa ressouns moving me thereto; first, because I knew that giff I had maid him on the counsail thairof, he had been blameit of putting it in my heid, quhilk had not bene his dewitie, for it becumis na subjectis to giff princes advice in sic materis; and therfoir, remembering quhat invyous and injust burding he dalie beires, *for leiding me by the nose*, as it wer, to all his appetytis, as giff I wer ane unressonable creature, or a bairne that could no nothing of myselff, I thocht pitie then to be the occasioun of the heaping of further injust sklander upoun his head. This far I speik for his parte, alsweill for my awin hounouris saik, that I be not sklanderit *as ane irresolute asse*, quha can do na-

thing of himself, as also that the honestie and innocencie of that man be not injustlie and untrewlie reproched.'

Having appointed his kinsman, the Duke of Lennox, (son to his former favourite), Regent in his absence, with Francis Earl of Bothwell for a co-adjutor, and having put the above most amusing declaration into the hands of his clerk-register, James, on the 19th of October, secretly embarked on board a small ship at Leith, with his chancellor, and immediately set sail for Norway, accompanied by other four vessels. This little fleet at first encountered rough weather, which detained it in the Frith of Forth for the better part of a week; but at length a fair wind sprung up, which carried him over to Slaikray in Norway, in the short space of four days. From Slaikray he immediately advanced, partly by land and partly by sea, to Upslo, where the Queen was still remaining. Arriving on the 19th of November, he was immediately introduced—'boots and all,' says David Moyses—to the Queen's lodging; his eagerness to see the young person with whom he was destined to spend his life, being too great to admit of the proper ceremonials. His conduct at the first interview was spirited enough, to be of a piece with the whole enterprise. He attempted to salute his consort, after the fashion of his country, with a kiss. She, ignorant of the good Scottish custom, refused to admit of his embrace. But, says Moyses, with delightful quaintness, 'after a few words privately spoken betwixt them, there followed a farther familiarity, and some kisses.'

They were married on the 23d, Mr David Lyndsay, the King's own minister, performing the

nuptial ceremony in the French language. James next morning presented his bride with the lordship and palace of Dunfermline, by way of a *mor-rowing-gift*, as it was called, a present usually made in that age by a bridegroom to his bride, on the morning after their nuptials: Dunfermline, therefore, became what in modern language would be called the Queen's jointure-house. Immediately after the marriage, ambassadors came from the court of Denmark, soliciting James to delay his return to Scotland till the beginning of the next year, and spend the intermediate time in Copenhagen. In consideration of the weather, and partly perhaps for reasons of state, he consented to this proposal; and, on the 22d of December, he and Queen Anne set out from Upslo on their journey to Denmark. They arrived, on the 21st of January, at Chronenburg Castle, on the celebrated Straits of Elsinore, where they were received with great distinction and rejoicing by the young King, his mother, and the four regents of the kingdom. It was proposed and agreed to, that they should remain till the solemnization of the marriage of Anne's eldest sister to the Duke of Brunswick.

It is perhaps at this place that a description should be given of the person of the young Scottish monarch. James was by no means a man of agreeable appearance. His figure was of middle stature, and sufficiently bulky above. But its dignity, and even its manliness, was destroyed by the extreme slenderness and feebleness of his limbs, which shook and struck against each other at every step. As he was obliged, by the fashion of his time, to wear clothes that were voluminous every

where but below the middle of the thigh, this fault of his person was particularly conspicuous. Though his brow had all the melancholy loftiness usually observed in the portraits of the Stuarts, and was a fine feature, his face was not good, either in front or in profile. His nose was hollow, and bottled a little at the extremity; his mouth was large, and his beard scanty. His countenance, altogether, was one of those which, from their essentially puerile cast, retain the appearance of youth for an extraordinary time, and only acquire the respectability which attaches to mature age, when wrinkles, and other traces of advanced years, have become too decided to be mistaken. It was one very disagreeable peculiarity of his person, that his tongue was too large for his mouth, causing him to beslabber the bystanders when he was either speaking or drinking. Scarcely any of the common engraved portraits are at all like him; but there are several excellent and most characteristic likenesses of him preserved in the picture-galleries of both countries.

With regard to his moral behaviour up to the present crisis, he seems to have been of singularly pure life. In his *Basilicon Doron*, he informs us that he avoided every wickedness during his early years, and draws a contrast betwixt his own conduct in this respect, and that of his grandsire James V., whose debaucheries had rendered his own government disreputable, and endangered that of his successors by the ambition of his illegitimate posterity. But, putting his own suspicious testimony out of the question, there is not so much as an imputation thrown upon his purity in youth, by any contemporary writer; nor has he

left a single amour on record. He was greatly addicted to the vice of swearing, which, however, is at the worst theoretical, and the result of fashion as much as any thing else. He was also inclined to indulge in drinking, a vice which advanced much upon him as he increased in years.

To this last pleasure, it appears, he might have given unlimited scope in Denmark, without incurring any blame. The Danes at this time were perhaps the most convivial people on the face of the earth. Spottiswood, in recording that no quarrels occurred among the King's attendants all the time they were in Denmark, says, with great simplicity, that this was the more wonderful, since 'it is hard for men in drink, *at which they were continually kept*, long to agree.' James himself dates a letter from 'Chronenburg, *quhair we are drinking and dryving ower in the auld maner ;*' a most amusing trait of self-portraiture. I need scarcely remind the reader, moreover, of the authenticated tradition regarding the whistle of the family of the Lauries of Maxwellton, which was won by an ancestor from a Bacchanalian champion among the Danes, who had challenged the Scottish toppers, on this occasion, to a trial of strength, and was fairly drunk under the table, after an almost unexampled debauch. *

James continued in Denmark during the entire months of February and March 1589-90, in the enjoyment not only of the pleasures of the social board, but also of a series of pageants and shows, which were got up by the court for his entertainment. He, in the mean time, sent home intelli-

* See Burns's Poems.

gence to Scotland, that he had the greatest reason to thank the Almighty for having 'clothed him with a wife' of the most excellent 'gifts and commodities.' From time to time he received intelligence, in return, from Scotland, that the country had never been in a quieter state; only two disturbances having happened during the whole winter—one occasioned by the clan Gregor in Balquhider, the other by 'that wicked and insolent man,' as Spottiswood terms him, Archibald Wauchope of Niddrie, who had killed a dependant of the Abbot of Holyrood—whereas, in general, there was seldom a week without some dreadful tale of murder or riot.

James, who, previous to his marriage, had seen no place besides the southern district of Scotland, appears to have been very much impressed by the sight of the continental states in which he was now sojourning, and to have drawn no favourable contrast between their magnificence—humble as it was, compared with that of the southern states of Europe—and the wretched poverty of his own country. He also seems to have been surprised not a little at the strength of the *executive* in Denmark, as compared with its weakness in Scotland. He naturally became anxious that, before his return, when, besides the queen, many dignified persons of her brother's court were to attend him, the objects which were to be presented to their eyes should be of as respectable a kind as the circumstances of the country would permit—that his palace should be put into good order, that the persons who were to receive him on the shore should be of good character, and that there should be none of those shameful breaches of the peace which had

all along disgraced his reign, and than which nothing was better calculated to give the strangers a mean idea of his government. Inspired by these notions, we find him writing a letter to his council in February, imploring them, with ludicrous earnestness, to prepare the country in a befitting manner for his arrival. The letter is a great curiosity, and, as it is sure at once to amuse the reader, and to increase his acquaintance with the King's character and style of writing, it is here inserted.

‘ My Lords of Counsal, that this general letter of mine may serve, asweill to you all, as to every one of yow in particular, lay the blame, I praye yow, upon the hast and fascheousnes of the dispatche, and not upon my sweirnes, althoughe I cannot denye, that to write with my own hand I am both slawe and sweire aneuch : I doubt not that you wille tak this in all good part, as if I wrote a trough of paper to every one of yow.

‘ Ye may now knaw, by the season of the yeir, that my coming home, God willing, drawes neire. I am surely treated here with all the honor and hartliness that this contrie people can imagine, I think we should not be unthankfull when theires comes in our bounds. *A king of Scotland with a new marid-wyfe, will not come hame every day.* For God's sake, respect not onely my honor in this, but the honor of our whole nation, and speciallie of yourselffis ; for my part will be leist in it. It is knowne that I am absent, and all the world knaws that when the gudeman is away he cannot be wyted of the misorders in the house ; but what may he think then of his servants and factors he has left therein ?

‘ Now, my Lords, since this is the only grete

proof of your diligence, without my presence or assistance, that ever I am able for to have of you, let me knawe now what remembrance ye have of me during my absence, by diligent remembring and performing such directions as the beirar hereof, the Master of Wark, hes in charge of me to deliver unto you. Remember specially upon the ending out of the Abbay, as yet lying in the deid-thraw, without the which we cannot be lodgit at our landing; and in good faith it is not the maner of this countrie to lye therout, for the greatnes of the frost; and for a token that ye have not forgotten us, ye may send two or three ships here to show us the way home; but let nae great men or gentilmen come in them, but many gude marinells; for I am already overchargeable to these folks here; besides that every one of you will have eneuch to do in the turnes I have employed you to do at hame. For Godsake, in any thing, respect my honor, that all discords and vaniteis and quarrells may be supercedit at this; for gif I took sic strait order for that the last yeir, when I lookit for my weifs coming hame and a certayne companye of strangers with her, how muckle mare sould it be this yeir when we are baith to cum hame and twice as gret a numbre of strangers, and speciallie sen I have seen so gude ane example in this countrie.

‘ Indede, I have gude cause to thank yow all for the great quietnes that ye have already kept, as I perceive by your last letters. Remember likewise that nae great man or counsellar presume to be at our landing, but suche as the beirar hereof will in a roll deliver unto you, ut omnia fiant decenter et cum ordine.

‘ Fail not to provide gude cheare for us ; for we have heir abundance of gude meit and *part of drinck* ; to the particulars of this I remit to my directions, as of all other things likewise.

‘ To conclude, I bothe pray you, and command you sleuth na tyme, and for my part sake do at this tyme *even mair nor is possible* ; for ye knaw I will never eit nor drink a fair wind.

‘ From the Castle Croneburg, the 19 day of February 1589.

‘ JAMES, REX. ’ *

The same solicitude is apparent in a letter of the same date, which the King wrote to the Reverend Robert Bruce, one of the ministers of Edinburgh. He had left Bruce a member of the Privy Council, and with a kind of understood commission of supervision over the morals of the kingdom. He now writes to him in a familiar strain, beseeching him to exert himself to keep the people in order before his return. ‘ Waken up all men, ’ he says, ‘ to attend my coming ; for I will come, as our maister sayeth, like a thief in the night, and whose lampe I find burning with oyle, these will I coin thanks to, but those that lack their burning lamps, provyded with oyle, will be barred at the door ; for I will not accept their crying, Lord, Lord ! at my coming, that have forgot me all the time of my absence. . . . *For God’s sake, take all the pains you can, to teach our people weill against our coming, lest we be all ashamed before strangers.*’ Could any thing be more characteristic of this singular monarch, so well aware as he always was of what ought to be

* Rymer, vii. ii.

done, and so willing that it should be done, yet so incapable of using the proper coercive measures for doing it? 'I think this time,' he adds, 'should be a holy jubilee in Scotland, and our ships should have the virtue of the ark in agreeing, *for a time at least*, naturales inimicitias inter foras; for, if it otherwise fall out (quod Deus avertat), I shall behove to come hame like a drunk man amongst them, which would be no strange thing, coming out of so drucken a countrie as this!' Then the necessities of the poor king are displayed. 'I pray you,' he says, 'heartilie recommend me to the good provost of the town, and in any thing he can pray him to assist my affairs, as I have ever been certain of his good will in my services. Specially desire him to further all he can the outreeking of three or four ships to meet me here, and convoy me hame.' [He had been enabled to sail for Denmark, solely by the generosity of a few private individuals, who each fitted out a little vessel.] 'And likewise, I doubt not he will assist the Maister of Wark in getting as many good craftsmen as may be had for ending out the half-perfyted Abbey, [his palace,] that now lies in the deid-thraw. * * * Thus recommending me and *my new rib* to your daylie prayers, I commit you to the only all-sufficient.'

Perhaps the reader will be inclined not only to smile at these indications of the poverty and imbecility of the Scottish monarch, but also to blame him in serious earnest for what is so inconsistent with the dignity of a sovereign. He should, however, pause to consider the dilapidated state in which James found his government and revenues, when he came of age; he should consider the

power of the nobles, many of whom could raise at any time far more men than their king ; and he should reflect on the barbarous condition of the people, just emerged from the horrors of a protracted civil war, and from the vices incident to an age of religious reformation. As for the pecuniary distresses of the sovereign, which here appear so extreme, he actually seems to have had no resource whatever, on any occasion of unusual expense like the present, except the benevolence of a few of the burghs, chiefly those of Fife, which was then the most commercial and the richest province of Scotland. The proper revenues of the crown had, long before this time, been alienated and embarrassed almost to extinction.

James's poverty, however, was perhaps never less distressing to him than on the present occasion. The pride of country, for which the Scotch have always been remarkable, induced them to do all in their power to fulfil his wishes in regard to the appearance of the kingdom before the expected strangers, and also in respect of the vessels which he desired to have sent out for his conveyance home. By an extraordinary exertion, though at the expense of a great multitude of individuals, the palace was finished and furnished in very splendid style, another house in the city was prepared for the Queen's Danish friends, a few small Fife coasters were sent out to Denmark, and a great variety of articles were prepared for the pageants which were to be enacted on his arrival. Besides these more important arrangements, there were some of a humbler nature, which equally marked the desire of the people to put the country into a holiday attitude. The town-council of Edinburgh,

resolving that the strangers should see as little as possible of the filth and the mendicity for which the country was remarkable, ordained that 'all persons purge and clenze the streits, calsayis, and gutteris fornent their awin housis to the mid channel, as weill in the hie gait [*principal street*] as in the vennelis [*lanes*],' and that 'all beggaris remove, swa they be nocht fund beggand within this brugh, or betuix this and Leith, or ony uther part within the liberty or jurisdiction of this burgh.' They also ordained the bailies 'to pas throw their quarteris, and borrow fra the honest nyctbouris thair of ane quantitie of the best sort of thair neiprie [*table linen*], to serve the strayngeris that sall arryve with the Queen, and the said bailies to gif the nyctbouris thair awin ticket of ressait thair of.'

On the first of May, after these and sundry other preparations had been made, the King and Queen arrived at Leith, accompanied by the Admiral of Denmark, and other persons of dignity, and having a convoy of thirteen large Danish ships of war. The citizens of Edinburgh and Leith immediately flocked to the shore, each in his best clothes and arms. About seven at night, the King led the Queen ashore, 'by a trance covered with tapestrie and cloth of gold, that her foot might not touch the earth. The Duke of Lennox, the Earls of Mar and Bothwell, with sundrie others, received them at the stayr-heads. The castle and ships shot great vollies.' * Mr James Elphinston, a senator of the College of Justice, (afterwards Lord Balmerino), welcomed the royal pair in a Latin

* Calderwood, MS.

oration. 'The Queen being placed in her lodgings, the King took the chief of the Danes by the hand, every one after another. [Between thirty and forty of these persons were dignified men, with 'goldin chenyeis of guid faschioun;'^{*} and the whole number was two hundred and twenty-four.] The King now received a visit from the minister Bruce, whose services in keeping the country quiet during his absence he acknowledged in very warm terms, afterwards accompanying him to the church of Leith, to return thanks to the Almighty for his prosperous voyage.

As the preparations at Holyroodhouse were scarcely yet completed, James remained for a few days in a palace, called 'the Kingis Wark' at Leith, his train chiefly lodging in the ships. At length, on the 6th of May, the royal party made their progress towards Edinburgh. 'The King and nobility rode before; the Queen came behind, in her Danish chariot, with her maids of honour, on each side of her Majesty one. The coach was drawn by eight horses, caparisoned in purple velvet, embroidered with gold and silver, very rich. The town of Edinburgh, Canongate, and Leith, in their arms, gave a volley of shot to the King and Queen in their passage, in joye of their safe arryval.'[†]—'In this manner, they passed to the Abbey of Holyroodhouse,' where 'the King, taking the Queen by the hand, led her through the inner close to the great hall, and thereafter to the cham-

• Moyses.

† Calderwood, MS., and Mr Gibson-Craig's 'Papers relative to the Marriage of King James VI.' 1828.

bers, which were richly hung with cloth of gold and silver.' *

The Queen was crowned in the Abbey church, on Tuesday, the 17th of May, Mr Robert Bruce performing the chief offices, which formerly used to be done by a bishop. The Presbyterian ministers on this occasion scrupled greatly about the propriety of anointing the Queen, judging that ceremony to be of a somewhat Popish savour; but James knew how to bring them to reason: He hinted that he could wait a little, till a certain bishop, whom he mentioned, could make it convenient to come to Edinburgh, to perform the ceremony. Alarmed at what he said, they lost no time in agreeing that there was no harm in the oil; and the ceremony was accordingly performed in the usual way. When it was concluded, Andrew Melville uttered a long congratulatory poem, in Latin hexameters, to the great delight of the King and his friends, who joined in soliciting that it should be printed. This poem was so elegant in its construction, and so apt to the occasion, as to attract the praise of the best foreign scholars, and to extend the fame of this great event in the life of James farther than it perhaps could have otherwise travelled.

About this time, James procured a marriage to take place betwixt his faithful school-fellow and counsellor, the Earl of Mar, and Lady Mary Stuart, daughter of the late, and sister to the present Duke of Lennox. It is a tradition in the family of Mar, that the Earl, before this period, when in widowhood, had consulted an Italian con-

* Calderwood, MS.

juror, as to the external appearance of the lady whom it should be his fate to marry for the second time, and that, the conjuror showing him a figure in a glass somewhat like Lady Mary, he at once fell distractedly in love with her. Unfortunately for his passion, the young lady had a great aversion to becoming the second wife of a man who had already an earlier family to inherit his title and estates; and, moreover, the King was supposed to have destined her for another. Mar, therefore, fell grievously ill, and seemed about to enact that strange absurdity, a man, with a large family, dying for love. But the King, being informed of his illness by a letter, visited him in his affliction, and cheered him up by exclaiming, in his usual boisterous way, 'By G—, ye shanna dee, Jock, for ony lass in a' the land!' His Majesty afterwards exerted those powers of small domestic intrigue for which he was remarkable, in bringing about a match between his Lordship and Lady Mary—a match which proved exceedingly happy.

The Queen, two days after her coronation, made a progress through the city of Edinburgh, unattended by James. The ceremonials used on the occasion were of a nature so costly, as to give us a more respectful notion of the resources of Scotland at the period, than we are in general disposed to entertain. At the same time, there was an antique pedantry in the shows and masques got up to welcome the Queen, which proves the public taste to have been very barbarous. A child like Cupid descended from a gilt globe above the gate of entry, to present the keys of the city to her

Majesty. * Sixty young citizens, dressed like Moors, danced through the town before her. The nine Muses stood round 'the Butter Tron'—*proh sce-lus!*—'bravely arrayed in cloth of silver and gold,' and sung psalms to the Queen as she passed, while a young man, probably designed for Apollo, accompanied them on the organ! The whole was an exquisitely absurd compound of ancient and modern divinity, being partly dictated by the literary taste for the classics, and the popular taste for religion. At the High Church, her Majesty heard a sermon;—at the Tolbooth, she was introduced to the four virtues, Justice, Temperance, Prudence, and Fortitude;—at the Cross, she was regaled—first with a psalm, and then with a sight of 'Bacchus, upon a puncheon of wine, drinking, and casting the liquor in cup-fulls upon the people.' The principal street of Edinburgh, famed for its width and loftiness, was on this day *lined with tapestry from top to bottom*, many of these pieces of tapestry representing stories in ancient history, so that the whole must have had a singularly magnificent effect. At the extremity of the city liberties, a box of precious stones, valued at twenty thousand crowns, was presented to her Majesty as the gift of the town, and she was again regaled with *psalms*, accompanied by organ music.

A few days before this grand ceremonial, the Queen's Danish friends had made a progress by Falkland, Dunfermline, and Linlithgow, to take sasine in her Majesty's name of the dotarial possessions which the King had granted to her by his

* The keys laid on a plate, and covered with a veil, as was the old fashion.

treaty of marriage. These dignitaries soon after left the country, accompanied by their retinues, all except about sixteen persons, male and female, who remained about the Queen's person. The Scotch chroniclers are inhospitably particular in recording that, during the time they staid in the country, they put it to an expense of twelve hundred merks daily; which was too immense an expenditure, over and above the usual costs of the court, to be long tolerable.

— Nothing else is remarkable about James's marriage, except that Elizabeth sent an ambassador to congratulate him on the event, and to carry presents to his wife. The ambassador was the same person * who had sat as chancellor on the jury which condemned his mother to the block; a proof striking, above all others, of what I have oftener than once had to point out in the course of this narrative, the want of delicacy—the total insensibility to all that is now called *good taste*, which characterized the age.

* The Earl of Worcester. He brought a cloak finely trimmed round, and set with rich jewels; a carcanet with pearls, a tablet, and a clock.

CHAPTER VI.

TURBULENCE OF THE EARL OF BOTHWELL AND THE CLERGY—
POETICAL EXERCISES—DEATH OF THE EARL OF MORAY.

1589—1591.

THE first year of James's married life was spent in some degree of quiet. Neither the nobility nor the ministers troubled him much during that period. It was not to be expected, however, that he could remain long unannoyed by one or other of these turbulent bodies. In the spring of 1591, an individual of the former class began a series of disturbances, which embittered the King's life for several years. This was Francis Earl of Bothwell, his illegitimate cousin, and the nephew of the former and more infamous Earl of the same title. Bothwell had been concerned in the intrigues which the Earl of Huntly, and some others of the Scotch nobility, carried on with the Spanish government, for furthering the object of the Invincible Armada; and in May 1589, he had been regularly condemned as guilty of treason on that account; though the King, from anxiety to keep on good terms with the Catholics, hung up the process against him and his accomplices. Bothwell was a man of exceeding violent passions. In the summer of

1589, he had received some contumelious language from Sir William Stuart, who was then in high favour, from his activity in suppressing the Catholics of the south of Scotland. As this language was given in the King's presence, he did not resent it on the instant; but he openly vowed to be revenged. Some days after, happening to meet Sir William on the principal street of Edinburgh, he drew his sword, and called to him to stand to his defence. A conflict took place, in which the servants joined. Stuart soon lost his sword, in consequence of a thrust by which he killed one of Bothwell's retinue. He then fled to a cellar in the neighbourhood, whither Bothwell pursued him, and there killed his defenceless antagonist by repeated wounds. Strange to say, the King, from his peculiar situation, was unable to take any legal cognizance of this atrocious homicide. He was even obliged to make this very nobleman, within a few months, one of his regents to govern the country during his absence in Denmark.

It is not now easy to discern, through the involved politics of James's court, how he at length came to look upon Bothwell as an enemy to his person. It is generally thought that Chancellor Maitland was the cause of his ruin, from dread of his turbulent and ambitious character. But, probably, the Earl had also offended James by some assumptions on the score of his descent; for although the King was, by his genealogy, the undoubted heir of both Scotland and England, yet he was induced, by the disposition which the Catholics and dissenters manifested to set aside his succession, to dread every sort of pretender, however absurd his claims.

Perhaps, after all, the more probable way of accounting for the disgrace of Bothwell, is to give credit to the charges brought against him by Maitland, and for which he ostensibly suffered, that he consulted with necromancers and witches, for the purpose of destroying the King, and procuring his own exaltation. It was his own constant declaration that he was innocent of any such offence; and the scepticism of later historians, in inducing them to scoff at witchcraft, has led them also to write as if there could have been no such thing as consulting with persons professing the art. But, as it is now known that both Bothwell and his son were, at a later period, noted for using such arts, * and as instances are on record of persons of equally good condition consulting sorcerers more than a century later, there seems to be no reason on that account for supposing his crime fictitious.—But this is a subject which will require to be treated at some length.

One of the most prominent charges brought against the intellect of King James, is his belief in witchcraft; and an allusion to his famous book on *Dæmonology*, is a favourite way of pointing an epigrammatic sentence against him. Many who never read his book take it upon them, from the changed opinions of the age regarding witchcraft, to sneer at him for giving his countenance to so base a superstition. But, how easy it is for a small mind, amidst the means and appliances of a late age, to assume a superiority over the picture of a great one struggling with the sloughs and shadows of a former and darker time!

* See Mr Sharpe's Introduction to Law's Memorials.

The true way of considering the case is this. There are some matters of opinion, in which no mind is in advance of its age. Witchcraft was one of these till within the last hundred years. It is quite observable, that all the best informed intellects, both in Scotland and in England, sanctioned that superstition, down to the time of the Revolution. The cause is the same with that which renders a great mind equally capable of religious fervour, with the meanest and most confined. Wherever it is looked upon as a duty to exempt any thing from the ordinary modes of reasoning, then no wonder that all kinds of intellect alike receive it without hesitation. Such was the case with witchcraft about two hundred years ago : it was an essential thing in the religious creed of all orders of the people ; to deny it was blasphemy, or at least disrespect for the dicta of Scripture. Surely it is a very strange thing, that a man who fulfilled in his life and opinions the whole idea of a good Christian, according to the views entertained of that character in his own time, should, at the distance of two hundred years, have so much discounted from his merit on one hand for superstition, so much on another for ignorance, and thus be left with a miserable fragmentary reversion of what was originally a very good repute !

But, while James merits this general exculpation from the charge of undue superstition, the ‘ *Dæmonologie* ’ which he compiled on the subject, is in itself a very strong particular one. This work is by no means, what is generally supposed, a treatise written as a piece of special pleading, to prove the existence of witchcraft, and to impress

that belief more firmly on the public mind. It is a sort of *jeu d'esprit*—the play of a scholarly mind on a subject much beneath it; and, instead of being an argument all on one side, it is a dialogue between a person who is unwilling to believe in witchcraft, and one who does believe in it, and rather a statement of all the reasonings *pro* and *contra*, than any thing else. There is much piety in the book, much quotation of scripture, much acute and sensible observation; but, though the writer evidently believes in the pseudo art which forms the subject of the treatise, and gives the last word on all occasions to the dialogist who believes in it, I cannot allow that the result of the whole is to give a mean view of the intellect of the writer, or to entitle him to the sneers which are so frequently aimed at him by modern writers, and by others, who are totally unacquainted in general with the real nature of what they are professing to despise.

It was early in the year 1591 that the discovery was made which led to Bothwell's accusation. The *ecclairecissement* was so simple in its process, as to put out of the question all surmises as to a conspiracy on the part of the King or of Maitland against him. A man of the name of Seaton, depute-bailie of Tranent, near Edinburgh, was surprised to observe that his servant girl, Giles Duncan, frequently absented herself from his house during the night, and that all of a sudden she began to profess a power of curing diseases miraculously, and doing other things which seemed above nature. He thought proper to torture her for the purpose of learning her secret, when she disclosed to him that she had a compact

with the devil, and performed miracles by witchcraft. Her confession being confirmed by a discovery of what was called a *witch's mark* on the front of her neck, she was put into prison at Edinburgh, where she soon after accused a multitude of other persons, male and female, of the same crime, all of whom were immediately apprehended. Among these were—Agnes Simpson, midwife at the village of Keith in Lothian, whom Spottiswood describes as ‘a woman not of the base and ignorant sort of witches, but matron-like, grave, and settled in her answers, which were all to some purpose’—Barbara Napier, wife of Archibald Douglas of Cashogle—and Euphame Macalyean, a gentlewoman of birth and fortune, the daughter of a deceased Judge, and wife of an advocate at the Scotch bar. These women are described by Johnston, in his history, as ‘*dignitate formæ haud degeneres* ;’ and indeed, it is the most surprising thing about the whole of this strange exposé, that it inculpated people of education and good rank. It is thus evident, that tampering with forbidden arts was very common among all orders of society in this age ; the greater crimes, as usual, flourishing at the same time that religion was loudest in its invectives against them, and the laws most severe in their punishment.

The rank of the prisoners, the high crimes they were charged with, and a curiosity which he seems to have entertained regarding occult arts in general, induced the King to have these women examined in his own presence at the palace. At first Simpson would confess nothing ; but, being taken back to prison and tortured, she, at the second interview, made a full declaration of all her

crimes. She confessed that, during the time his Majesty was in Denmark, she had, with some accomplices, endeavoured to destroy his life at the command of the Earl of Bothwell, by exposing a wax image of him at a slow fire, and using some incantations for the purpose of causing his person to melt away by corresponding degrees; that she had used arts to prevent the vessel in which the Queen was embarked, from reaching Scotland, and afterwards to wreck the ship in which both their Majesties sailed from Denmark; and that, when these attempts had failed from some informality in the process, she endeavoured to procure from infernal sources, information for Bothwell as to the age his Majesty was naturally destined to reach, and whether he should have any chance of succeeding him. Besides these matters of serious import, she confessed many others which were only ludicrous:—on the eve of last Hallowmass, * she had gone, by the invitation of the devil, to the church of North Berwick, in East Lothian, where, on her arrival, she joined a company of about two hundred other sorcerers and sorceresses, all of whom immediately proceeded to dance through the churchyard, to a tune which was played to them on a Jew's harp by Giles Duncan, and each alternately chanting to another,

Cummer, go ye before; cummer, go ye:
If ye will not go before, cummer, let me.

[Here the King caused Duncan to be brought before him, in order to play that tune over again;

* Halloween, a night consecrated, as all persons acquainted with Burns's poems must recollect, to the revels of witches and hobgoblins.

which she did, to the great amazement of his Majesty and the courtiers present.] When the dance was concluded, a young sorcerer of the name of Cunningham, schoolmaster of Prestonpans, who took a lead in the whole proceedings, opened the church, and lighted a number of candles ; when, the whole assemblage having entered and seated themselves, the devil suddenly started up in the pulpit, in the appearance of ‘ ane meikle black man,’ ‘ clad in a black gown, with a black hat upon his head,’ his nose like an eagle’s beak, and his hands exhibiting claws instead of nails at the extremities. Being surrounded by lights, like a minister of the present day at an evening discourse—each light ‘ held lyk by ane deid man’s hand’ (a trait of horror which perhaps suggested part of Burns’s description of the interior of Alloway Kirk), the Enemy of Man preached a burlesque sermon on the text, ‘ Many go to the market, but all buy not;’ after which he cried over the names of his congregation, to which one by one answered. At his command, they then opened three graves, two within, and one without the church, and, taking forth the corpses, cut off certain joints, which he directed them to grind into a powder, for the purpose of being used in their incantations. He then asked if they had been good servants to him since their last meeting, and what particular service every one had done. He ordered them to keep his commandments, which were, in one word, just ‘ to do all the evil they could.’ Finally, as they had that night displayed a little negligence regarding the hour of attendance, and kept him waiting for some time before they arrived, he subjected them to a penance similar to

the salutation which good Catholics perform to the Pope's toe, the women going before, and then the men. According to the report of Calderwood, the historian of the Scottish church, one of the men, whose nickname was Graymeill, endeavoured to avoid this degradation by staying behind the door; but Satan marked him in his retreat, and 'it behoved him also to kiss at last.' The assembly then broke up.

Among *fifty* distinct instances of necromancy, which are displayed against Simpson in her indictment, perhaps the reader may tolerate one for a specimen. Being sent for to Edmonstone, to decide by her supernatural skill whether the lady of the house should recover from an illness or not—for women of her order appear in that age to have been as regularly called to the bedsides of the sick as physicians—she told the attendants that she could give them the required information that evening after supper, appointing them to meet her in the garden. She then passed to the garden, and, as was her custom in such cases, uttered a metrical prayer, which, according to her own confession, she had learned from her father, and which enabled her to determine whether the patient would be cured or not, as, if she said it with one breath, the result was to be life, but, if otherwise, death. This prayer was as follows:—

' I trow [*trust*] in Almighty God, that wrought
Baith heaven and earth, and all of nought;
In his dear son, Christ Jesu,
In that comely lord I trow,
Was gotten by the Haly Ghaist
Born of the Virgin Mary,
Stapped to heaven, that all weil than,
And sits at his father's richt hand.

He bade us come and their to dome
 Baith quik and deid to him convene.
 I trow also in the Haly Ghaist;
 In haly kirk my hope is maist,
 That haly ship where hallowers wins
 To ask forgiveness of their sins,
 And syne to rise in flesh and bane,
 The lip that never mair has gane.
 Thou says, Lord, loved may he be
 That formed and made mankind of me.
 Thou coft [*bought*] me on the haly cross,
 Thou lent me body, saul, and voce,
 And ordanit me to heavenly bliss;
 Wherefore I thank ye, lord, of this.
 That all your hallowers loved be,
 To pray to them that pray to me.
 And keep me fra that fellon fae,
 And from the sin that saul would slay.
 Thou, lord, for thy bitter passion in,
 To keep me from sin and warldly shame,
 And endless damnation. Grant me the joy never
 will be gane, *

Sweet Christ Jesus. Amen. '

Having stopped in the course of this long prayer, she despaired of the lady's life. However, she called upon the devil, by the name of Elpha, to

* Her prayer, or conjuration for the healing of sickness, was as follows:—

' All kynds of ill that ever may be,
 In Christ's name I conjure ye.
 I conjure ye, baith mair and less,
 By all the vertues of the messe,
 And rycht sa with the naillis sa,
 That nailed Jesus and not ma,
 And rycht sa by the samen blude,
 That reekit ower the ruthful rude,
 Furth of the flesh and of the bane,
 And in the eard and in the stane,
 I conjure ye in God's name. '

Records of Justiciary.

come to speak to her. He presently appeared climbing over the garden-wall, in the shape of a large dog; and he came so near her, that, getting afraid, she charged him, by the law that he lived on, to keep at a certain distance. She then asked if the lady would live; to which he only answered, that "her days were gane." He, in his turn, asked where the young gentlewomen, daughters to Lady Edmonstone, were at present. She answered, that she expected soon to see them in the garden. "Ane of them," said he, "will be in perill; I wish to have her." On her answering, that it should not be so with her consent, he "departit frae her," says the indictment, "yowling;" and from that time till after supper, he remained in the draw-well. After supper, the young ladies walked out into the garden, to learn the result of Mrs Simpson's inquiries; on which the devil came out of the well, and, seizing the skirts of one of them, (probably a married one, as she is called Lady Torsonce), drew her violently towards the pit from which he had emerged; and it is added that, if Simpson and the other ladies had not exerted themselves to hold her back, he would have succeeded in his wishes. Finding himself disappointed of his prey, he 'passit away thair-efter, with ane yowle.' The object of his ravenous passions fainted, and was carried home; she lay in a phrenzy for three or four days, and continued sick and cripple for as many months. And it was remarked that, whenever the wise wife of Keith was with her, she was well; but, on her going away, all the dangerous symptoms returned. In the mean time, it is to be supposed, the old lady died.

That King James should sit in his court at Holyroodhouse, and listen with interest and belief to such confessions as these, seems at the present day, it must be allowed, as strange a thing as well could be. It is only, however, an illustration of the age he lived in, of its absurd opinions and practices, not of his mind in particular. He may of course be equally justified for the severe measures which he took with the wizards,* all of whom, it must be remembered, were more or less guilty of the real crimes of abusing the credulity of the people, and of at least making the attempt to do injury to their fellow-creatures. A great number of those miserable wretches were put to death during the course of the year; almost all of them testifying to the justice of their sentence, by confessing their guilt at the very stake; while the people expressed scarcely a murmur at their fate.

In consequence of the confessions of Mrs Simpson, the Earl of Bothwell voluntarily entered into confinement in Edinburgh Castle, desiring to be tried for his supposed offence, the whole of which he denied. It was his first belief that the wizards, on account of their infamous character, would not be admitted as evidence against him; and he therefore anticipated a triumphant acquittal, which should not only restore him to society and the

* In the Dæmonology, he says, 'to spare the life, and not to strike when God bids strike, and so severely punish in so odious a fault and treason against God, is not only unlawfull, but doubtlesse no lesse a sin in that magistrate, nor it was in Saules sparing of Agag; and so comparable to the sin of witchcraft itself, as Samuel alleged at that time.'

King's favour, but also, perhaps, give him a preponderance against the obnoxious power of the Chancellor. It being soon determined, however, that the evidence of such persons might be admitted, on the same principle as that by which women, children, and persons of bad fame, were taken, by the law of the land, to prove treason, Bothwell thought proper to break his prison, and seek safety in flight. James then caused doom of forfeiture to be pronounced against him, for his concern in the conspiracy of the Catholics two years before, it being thought improper to outlaw him for the new crimes laid to his charge. Proclamation was at the same time made, by sound of drum, forbidding the subjects to afford him any countenance, food, or shelter, and commanding all to assist the magistrates in endeavouring to apprehend him.

Bothwell entertained a conviction that he was beloved by James, and he therefore threw the whole blame of this severity upon the Chancellor. With the audacity inspired by this sentiment, and justified by the imbecility of the executive, he came to Leith three days after the proclamation, and, deliberately taking his supper in the house of a friend, set both the laws and their administrators at defiance. The common bell of Edinburgh was rung for the convocation of the citizens, that they might go and seize the traitor who thus insulted his country. But, instead of any attempt being made to annoy him, he was permitted to act upon the offensive against them. With a train of sixteen horse, he rode up to the lower gate of the city, within which, at the distance of a few yards, the house of Chancellor Maitland was situated.

There, loudly proclaiming that he was *at the Chancellor's horn*, and not at the King's—that is to say, that he considered himself a rebel against Maitland only—he threw a forty-shilling piece on the ground, and said he would give that to any body who should bring forth his enemy without the gates. Nobody presuming to accept the offer, he said he would leave the piece, as a token that he had defied him. He then retired without the least annoyance, Maitland contenting himself with the negative measure of placing a guard of citizens upon his house, to prevent a second attempt of the same kind.

That an outlaw with sixteen attendants should have openly bravadoed in this manner before a king, a capital, and a seat of law, may well seem surprising in the present age. Yet it is only one of many circumstances which could be instanced to illustrate the singularly feeble condition of the government at this period. One or two cases may be mentioned. The King, immediately before his marriage, was one day walking down the High Street of Edinburgh, attended by the Duke of Lennox and the Earl of Home, when the former nobleman, happening to meet the Laird of Logie, one of the gentlemen of the chamber, who had offended him some time before, by refusing to retire from the royal closet when Lennox expressed a wish to have it *ushed* or voided, he drew his sword: Logie drew his to defend himself; and a conflict took place by the very side of the sovereign; who, with his usual timidity, flew for refuge to the nearest alley, and was not content till he had got himself ensconced in a skinner's shop. Nearly about the same time, when James was sit-

ting in the tolbooth of Edinburgh, to give hearing on a case of divorce, in which a friend of Bothwell was the defender, that nobleman forced away a man who was to give evidence for the plaintiff, out of the very house where the King was holding his court, and, carrying him off to his castle of Crichton, through officers of court, citizens, and all other opposition, there threatened him with the gallows for having gone to be a witness against his friend. * But the great number of murders, which the King, however willing, found himself unable to prosecute, though many of them took place on the streets of the city, is a sufficient proof of the powerlessness to which his poverty, and the religious and political dissensions of the country, had reduced him.

Bothwell was known to be again in Leith on the 18th of October; when the King having, with some degree of spirit, mustered a party of armed friends, led them in person to attempt his apprehension. The Earl thought proper, on this occasion, to fly; and the party was obliged to return, having only seized the fugitive's best horse, 'called Valentine.' †

On the 27th of December occurred his noted attempt on James's person, called 'the Raid of the Abbey.' Bothwell had now procured some degree of countenance and assistance from the Duke of Lennox, who, being a close attendant upon James's person, was able to give the best instruction regarding the proper method of invading it. Thus befriended, he resolved to renew the game played at Ruthven and Stirling some years before,

* Calderwood, MSS.

† Ibid.

hoping, by the possession of the royal person, to revolutionize the administration in his own favour. At seven o'clock on the day mentioned, when James had just concluded supper, he was admitted, with a large party, by some persons belonging to the palace, who were upon the conspiracy. At that late hour, when no suspicion was entertained of his approach, he might have succeeded with great ease in seizing the King, who, idling in the Queen's chamber, had scarcely a guard to protect his person from the assailants. But a piece of imprudent haste spoilt the whole plot. One of Bothwell's accomplices was James Douglas of Spot, whose only object in the enterprise was to liberate some of his servants, who had been confined in the palace on suspicion of murder. This man was no sooner within the palace, than, eager to dispatch his own business, he caused his followers to break up the doors of the prison where his men were confined, with fore-hammers. The noise roused the King, and also the Chancellor, who happened to be there that night. Immediately all was bustle within the palace. The Chancellor shut himself up securely in his own chambers. The door of the Queen's apartments were barred. James, not trusting to the strength of that part of the palace, rushed down a back stair, and threw himself into a tower, which was much more capable of defence. When Bothwell came to the doors, and found them barred, he expressed the most violent rage. Calling for fire, he vowed to burn down all obstacles which lay between him and his prince. At that instant, however, Sir James Sandilands, one of the gentlemen of the King's chamber, entered the palace by a pri-

vate way through the church, accompanied by a number of the citizens, who had gathered at the first alarm. Had there been any lights, he would have seized Bothwell and all who were with him. But the darkness permitted the assailants to escape. As Bothwell went out, he shot the King's equerry, who encountered and attempted to stop him. Some of his attendants were seized, and, next day, hanged at the palace gate, without assize.

James was filled with sincere indignation at this attempt ; but he was also inspired with a feeling of gratitude to the Almighty for having saved him. He accordingly went next day to the High Church, to return public thanks for his preservation. At the conclusion of the sermon, he stated to the people all the benefits he had conferred on Bothwell, and all the acts of ingratitude which that nobleman had committed in return. He at the same time complained of the ' harbourage ' which some of them gave this notorious public enemy, but thanked the magistrates and people of Edinburgh for their prompt services against him on the preceding night.

On the following day, as he attended public worship in his usual way at the High Church, John Craig, noted in Scottish history as the man who drew up the national Covenant in 1584, offered him one of those insults from the pulpit, which were unquestionably not the least of the causes which he had for his subsequent attempts to introduce a different frame of worship into Scotland. The insult was the more poignant, that it was offered by one of the chaplains of his own household. It consisted of an invective against him for having ' lightly regarded the many bloody

shirts presented to him by his subjects craving justice.* To reprove the King's indifference, continued Craig, 'God had made a noise of crying, and sent fore-hammers to his door!' James, much incensed at this ribaldry, requested the people to stay after sermon till he should say something in his justification. Yet the only remark he made, besides what he said in his defence, was, that, if he had thought his *fee'd servant* would have dealt with him after that manner, he would not have suffered him to be so long in his house. Perhaps, if these clergymen had had a somewhat greater share of the good nature which overflowed in their sovereign, much disturbance might have been spared to the country during the succeeding century. It is not even recorded that James displaced Craig from his situation in the household.

It would be difficult to conceive a situation more disagreeable to the faculties of a king, than that in which James was now placed. With an unquestionable right to the limited monarchy of Scotland, and the assurance of succeeding to a much more important kingdom, with considerable powers of intellect and much literary accomplishment, with the best intentions and a sincere wish to consult the good of every individual in the kingdom, yet such was the difficulty of his circum-

* This was an allusion to the custom of the friends of a murdered person carrying his bloody shirt on a pole to the King, as an incentive to the execution of the law upon the guilty. When the Colquhouns were overthrown in battle by the Macgregors on Lochlomond side, in 1600, *two hundred bloody shirts* were brought before the King's eyes in this manner!

stances, that he was little better than a cipher in the state, and obliged every day in the world to do things the most repugnant to his nature. On the part of the nobility, he found little sympathy, as each of them was engaged in studying his own selfish ends ; from the clergy he met with still less, for every thing he did excited in them only a suspicion of some design against their own order ; while his distress only afforded them hopes of enforcing their exorbitant claims with the greater success.

It seems to have been on this principle that they selected the present juncture for the purpose of inflicting what they called an *admonition* upon him. On the 8th of December, a deputation had visited him, to administer a rebuke for his neglect of the exercises of religion in his family, and to urge him to have scripture read to him at dinner and supper, instead of the books of ordinary literature, which, as we learn from his *Basilicon Doron*, he delighted to have perused for him on those occasions. This was all they thought it *delicate* to say to him publicly ! But on the 17th, one of the most forward and zealous of their number, Mr John Davidson, visited him privately, to fill up the grosser articles of the dittay. This reverend gentleman ‘ admonished him of neglect of justice, and placing unfit men in offices, and of granting remissions.’ James, with a degree of patience and condescension, which at once does him honour, and supplies us with the real view of his unhappy circumstances, answered, ‘ that he found no concurrence in inferior magistrates—no, not even against Bothwell, who sought his life ; farther, that there were diverse offices of justice,’ including the sheriff-

ships, which were claimed by heritage. As for the pardons which he granted with his own goodwill, ' he would answer for every one that he gave, by good law and reason. ' As for those which he gave against his will, ' such was the multitude of his businesses, that some about him deceived him by importunity, or got stolen subscriptions ; from which kind of dealing he thought no flesh in his place could well be free. In regard to unfit officers, he really knew not where to get others, for no man seemed to think of any interest but his own ; and his own was so constantly in the way, that he by no chance could consult that of the public. Davidson appears to have found this apology but too satisfactory ; for the historian of his church here breaks off with the blunt remark—' Time straitening Mr Davidson, he desired he might have access another time, which was granted. '

Perhaps, the best comment upon the above apology, will be the preface which James this year affixed to a second volume of juvenile poems, entitled ' Poetical Exercises ; ' a composition, as Mr Gillies remarks, ' so interesting and unassuming, that it cannot fail to impress the reader with a favourable opinion of its author. '

' Receave here, beloved reader, a short poetique discourss which I have selected and translated from amongst the rest of the works of Du Bartas, as a vive mirror of this last and most decreepit age. Here shalt thou see clearly, as in a glass, the miseries of this wavering world, ' &c. &c. ' And in case thou find aswel in this work as in my Lepanto following, many incorrect errors, both of the dytement and orthography, I must pray thee to accept this reasonable excuse, which is this. Thou

considers, I doubt not, that, upon the one part, I composed these things in my verie young and tender years, wherein Nature, except she were a monster, can admit of no perfection. And now, on the other part, being of riper years, *my burden is so great and continuall, without any intermission, that, quhen any ingyne and age could, my affairs and fasherie will not permit me to remark the wrong orthography, committed by the copies of my unlegible and rugged hand, far less to amend my proper errours.* Yea, scarclie but at stolen moments, have I the lesure to blenk upon any paper, and yet nocht that with free and unvexed spirit. Alwaies, rough and unpolished as they are, I offer them unto thee: which being well accepted, will move me to haste the presenting unto thee of my Apocalyps [a paraphrastic commentary on the book of the Revelations, which he had written in the year 1585], and also such number of my Psalms as I have perfyted, [a translation of the Psalms, which Pope considered the best in the English language], and encourage me in the ending out of the rest. And thus, beloved reader, recommending these favours to thy friendly acceptance, I bid thee heartilie farewell.

Surely he must have had little experience of the joys and sorrows of literature, and must have very ill considered the difficulty with which such pursuits are reconciled with the necessities of everyday life, who can deliberately sneer at this touching appeal, written as it is with such simple and unaffected feeling, and so utter an absence of all assumption from rank or other external circumstances. Yet it was this same man, who, in the moments stolen from sovereignty and sadness, and

when left alone with the Egeria of his own unrobed and uncrowned fancy, wrote such poetry as the following—which appeared, about the same time, at the conclusion of a French translation of his poem of Lepanto, executed by the celebrated Du Bartas.

The azure vaulte, the crystall circles bright,
The gleaming fyrie torches powdered there ;
The changing round, the shining beamie light,
The sad and bearded fyres, the monsters faire ;
The prodigies appearing in the aire,
The rearding thunders and the blustering winds,
The foules in hue and shape and nature rare.
The prettie notes that winged musicians finds ;
In earth, the savrie flouris, the metalled minds,
The wholsum herbes, the hautie pleasant trees,
The silver streams, the beasts of sundrie kinds,
The bounded roares and fishes of the seas ;
All these for teaching man the Lord did frame
To do his will whose glorie shines in thame.

‘ When I read this sonnet, ’ says Mr Gillies, in his preface to the late reprint of King James’s Poems, ‘ I almost fear, that, at the beginning of these desultory remarks, I have too much undervalued the pretensions of James to poetic merit. ’

One of the *disagréments* of James’s situation was the necessity under which he lay of heading little enterprises against Bothwell ; all of which were unsuccessful, and therefore attended with the consequence of lowering him in the eyes of his people. On one of these occasions, indeed, being the most awkward warrior in the world, he tumbled into a pool of stagnant water, where he would have been

drowned in spite of all the assistance his courtiers could render him, if a rustic had not dragged him out. * But the distresses which had beset the King up to this period, were as nothing to those which were about to result to him from a very unfortunate transaction, which took place on the night of the 8th of February 1591-2. For some time past, there had been a feud between the Earl of Huntly, the chief Catholic peer, and the Earl of Moray, who, on the other hand, was one of the leading men among the Presbyterians. Moray, who was the son-in-law and heir of the celebrated Regent, and who was universally esteemed for his amiable disposition and singularly handsome person, had provoked the justifiable hostility of Huntly, by protecting a felon, whom he, as sheriff, endeavoured to bring to justice—a hostility, however, which never assumed a decided aspect, till one of Huntly's kinsmen was killed by a shot from Moray's house of Darnaway, while assisting him in prosecuting the ends of his office. Soon after Bothwell's attempt on Holyroodhouse, a report having arisen that that outlaw had gone north to seek assistance from Moray, the King, to prevent the latter from falling into such a snare, dispatched Lord Ochiltree to bring him to court, intending also to attempt a reconciliation between him and Huntly. Meanwhile, a second report arising that Moray had already been in league with Bothwell, and was even seen in disguise among his attendants at the Raid of the Abbey, James was induced, by the importunity of Huntly, to grant him a commission to apprehend the young nobleman, and

* Calderwood, MS.

bring him to trial. Thus provided, on the afternoon of the 8th of February, Huntly rode with a large party of horse, from the house of the Provost of Edinburgh, where the King then lodged for security; and, giving out that he was to attend a horse-race at Leith, directed his journey across the Queensferry to Dunnibrissle house in Fife, where he understood the Earl of Moray was then residing with his mother. Thus, it will be remarked, he made but one stage betwixt the presence-chamber of his sovereign, and the scene of that cruel tragedy which he was about to perform. Arriving at Dunnibrissle about midnight, he beset the house, and called to the young Earl to come forth and surrender himself. Possibly, if Moray had at once paid obedience to the royal commission which Huntly bore, the terms of that commission might not have been transgressed; for we can scarcely conceive that a nobleman of Huntly's known good character would have murdered an enemy in cold blood. But Moray had too good reason to dread the resentment of a man whom he had so deeply injured; and he resolved to defend himself to the last extremity. Huntly then applied fire to the gates, for the purpose of forcing an entrance. Moray, despairing of his situation, held counsel with his friend Dunbar, the Sheriff of Moray, as to the possibility of escape. Dunbar conceived the idea of rushing out through the assailants, so that, while they were busied in despatching, or at least in pursuing him, the Earl might have an opportunity of escaping comparatively unobserved. He accordingly threw himself amongst them, and was instantly killed. Moray followed, and had the good fortune, as his gener-

ous friend anticipated, to escape through the Gordons, and make his way down to a rugged part of the beach near the house. The velvet edge of his helmet, however, had caught fire as he rushed through the flames, and while he was there endeavouring to ensconce himself among the rocks, its light attracted the attention and pursuit of the enemy, who immediately fell upon him, and dispatched him by repeated wounds. It is but justice to Huntly to say, that the chief perpetrator of this deed was a headstrong and vindictive cadet of the family—Gordon of Buckie—who, inflicting a gash on Moray's face the expiring youth, mindful even at that moment of his distinguished beauty, murmured forth, "You have spoilt a better face than your own." Huntly is said to have approached after his younger kinsman had despatched their victim; but Buckie, swearing an oath that the Earl should be "as deep in" as himself, compelled him to alight from his horse, and inflict a few wounds on the insensate corpse. They then hurried from the scene, leaving the body stretched on the beach, the house burning, and even a relation of their own wounded on the ground. Yet they do not appear to have entertained any great apprehensions regarding the consequences of their misdeed. At that time, it was judged equally honourable, in Scotland, to inflict vengeance on an enemy, and to afford succour to a friend. The Earl of Huntly retired to an inn at the neighbouring village of Inverkeithing, where he rested for the night. Nay, he even had the coolness to send his friend Buckie immediately back to Edinburgh, to inform the King of what he had done.

Buckie soon found that his night's work was

apt to be taken ill, and decamped from Edinburgh in the morning, just in time to escape seizure. In all probability, he never reached the King; for it is known that James was that morning abroad very early at the hunting, to all appearance unconscious of the event, although, from the grounds where he pursued his amusement (those of Inverleith and Wardie), he could see the expiring flames of Dunnibrissle House across the waters of the Firth of Forth. On his return to town, he found the streets full of lamentation for the murder of Moray, and strong suspicions universally entertained that he himself was accessory to it. Huntly had left the royal lodgings immediately before the action; a messenger had come to apprise the King of its accomplishment; and he had gone to hunt on a place where he could solace himself with the speediest intelligence of the event, by beholding the conflagration of the house. All these circumstances, besides the suspicion of his leaning to the Catholic, against the Puritan party, and a still vaguer conjecture that he had been jealous of Moray's intimacy with the Queen, were strongly insisted upon against him.

The 9th of February was thus a day of excessive distress to James. Finding himself suspected, and knowing no better method of clearing himself, he sent for a few ministers, whom he entreated that they would address the public in his favour from their pulpits. These gentlemen, however, knew better how to benefit themselves by what had taken place. It had all along been their tactics to work power to themselves out of the hands of the King, by aggravating the distresses of his government; and seeing that the popular cla-

mour against him for Moray's death might be the means of humiliating him still further, they utterly refused to do what he desired—leaving him with a hint that his best course to clear himself would be to pursue the murderers—which they knew he could not do—or which, were it possible, would still be in their favour, as calculated to destroy a Catholic. James's only resource was to publish a proclamation, in which he declared, upon his royal word, that his concern in the slaughter was no greater than that of David, when Abner was killed by Joab.

But the greatest distress of the day remained yet to take place. Lady Downe, mother of the deceased Earl, arrived at Leith in a boat, carrying with her the bodies of her son and his friend the sheriff, which she wished to present to the gaze of the people, in order to stimulate the vengeance of the laws against their murderers. To prevent so indecent a spectacle, and one so apt to inflame the public mind, already too much excited, James was obliged to forbid the bodies to be brought to Edinburgh. Lady Downe, having then caused a picture to be drawn of her son's mangled body, brought it to the King, enclosed in a piece of fine lawn cloth, and, exhibiting it before his eyes, with vehement lamentations, earnestly demanded justice. James could only join her in mourning the death of her son. She then took out three bullets which had been found in Moray's body, and, presenting one to the King, and another to a courtier who stood by, said she would reserve the third to herself, to be bestowed upon him that should hinder justice. All that James could do for her gra-

tification, was to order for execution the young man who had been left wounded by the Gordons, and whom she had brought over. He died, strongly protesting that he had no hand in Moray's slaughter, although acknowledging that he deserved death for other offences.* Another person, a footman of the Earl of Huntly, was executed at the same time, perhaps equally innocent.

This was in reality the whole extent of the justice which it was in James's power to execute. The Earl of Huntly had retired to his *country* in the North, where he was a far more powerful man than the King. Even if he could have been apprehended, was it possible for James to procure his punishment? Or was punishment strictly due, when the provocation, the morality of the age, and his not having himself been the actual murderer, were considered?

To escape, in some measure, the infamy which accrued to him on this account, the King made a progress to the West against Bothwell, and fixed his court for some time at Glasgow. The clergy still cried out most furiously against Huntly, whom they endeavoured to get excommunicated. James, who justly complained that they would never gratify him by excommunicating *his* enemy, Bothwell, was much incensed when he heard of their proceedings against Huntly, whose crime, in his estimation, was not so great, as not having been directed against the person of the sovereign. He said, in his anger, that "it would never be weill

* As this person appears from Spottiswoode to have been a cousin of the Earl, it cannot well be said that the murder of the Earl of Moray was altogether unavenged.

till noblemen and gentlemen gat licence to break ministers' heads." There was much sense in the saying ; for it is plain, that these men took freedoms with all orders of their fellow-creatures, and occasioned much disturbance, purely because they felt secure from personal violence.

An arrangement was at length made for staying the public appetite for vengeance against Huntly. Having received a promise from the King, that his person should be quite safe, he entered into ward at Blackness Castle, for the avowed purpose of standing his trial. He took care, however, that he should have such a number of faithful Gordons to cheer his confinement, as put the prison almost into his own keeping. When the popular clamours had a little subsided, he came out upon a bail of twenty thousand pounds ; and he eventually endured no trial. The Lady Downe was so indignant at his impunity, that she took ill and died, leaving her malediction to King James. Huntly survived the transaction five-and-forty years, and Gordon of Buckie for even a still longer period ; but it is gratifying to know that the latter, who was the real murderer, afterwards expressed the greatest contrition for his crime. The chief result of the whole transaction was, that the Presbyterian ministers—enabled by a proper use of the public irritation to push James very hard—now procured a parliamentary sanction for the establishment of their plan of church-government, which had never before been formally recognised by the legislature. They were therefore erected into a court independent of all earthly law, and only to be governed by the will of the invisible God, as it might please

themselves to interpret it. A more melancholy proof could not be given of the extreme humility to which James, and all his maxims of government, were brought at the present unhappy crisis of his life.

CHAPTER VII.

TURBULENCE OF BOTHWELL AND THE CLERGY CONTINUED—
PLOTS OF THE CATHOLIC LORDS—BOTHWELL RESTORED—AND
FORFEITED—BATTLE OF BALRINNES—DEATH OF CHANCELLOR
MAITLAND.

1591—1595.

THE earlier part of the year 1592 was chiefly employed by James in endeavours to seize the Earl of Bothwell ; but on the 26th of June, that nobleman made a second attempt, in his turn, to seize the King. While James was quietly residing at Falkland, a palace of which he was extremely fond, on account of the extensive hunting-grounds which surrounded it, Bothwell, having raised a considerable force upon the Borders, suddenly advanced during the night, and had very nearly surprised the King. Fortunately, however, Sir James Melvill gained intelligence of his motions, and was able to dispatch a servant in time to warn James of his approach. At first, the courtiers prevailed upon the King to laugh at the intelligence, many of them being in reality engaged by Bothwell to open the doors, and assist him in seizing the royal person. The messenger then retired in anger ; but, falling in with Bothwell's company as he went home, he thought it his duty to return, and make a second attempt to

warn his Majesty. Falling into the ranks, as one of their company, he got back to Falkland, and locked the outer gate of the palace, a few minutes before the conspirators were ready to make the attack. He then used his voice loudly and vehemently, to prevail on the King to enter the *tower*, or fortified part of the palace, and to rouse his attendants to his defence. Meanwhile, James, hearing the well-known cry of ‘Bothwell! Bothwell!’ which at that moment arose without, obeyed the man’s directions with the utmost haste, taking care to gather all his armed friends around him, and to store his fortalice with such victuals as might enable him to hold out a siege for some hours, till he might be rescued by his subjects. Bothwell now subjected the tower to a regular beleaguement: his men fired at every aperture where they thought a bullet might take effect; and the courtiers, in their turn, directed their shot from the same apertures against the assailants. At last, Bothwell having become convinced that he had lost his opportunity, he retired in despair, and permitted his men to procure some repose on the ascent of the Lomond Hill, opposite the Palace; but towards seven in the morning, dreading lest the country people might assemble, and enable the King to turn the assault upon himself, he caused his men to rifle the royal stables, the park, and the town, of all the horses they could find, and, having thus done all he could to prevent a pursuit, he made the best of his way to the south of the Forth, designing to take his company back to their fastnesses on the Borders. So speedily was the alarm of this *raid* spread over the country, that before night James was at the head of a body of three thousand men, partly from the Fife towns, and

partly even from Perthshire and Angus. But the want of horses, and Bothwell's precipitate retreat, prevented him from putting these good friends to any use. Eighteen men were next day seized on Calder Muir, where they had fallen asleep from mere fatigue ;—they were brought to Edinburgh, and, as they were all persons of infamous character, the whole were hanged at once without ceremony.

The rest of this year was spent in vain attempts to seize the troublesome person, who had thus, for the second time, put him into fear of his life. From town to town, and from valley to valley, James continued for several weeks to follow his volatile enemy, exposing himself to general ridicule, and much danger, without ever once getting near him. At this period, moreover, the conduct of the clergy formed no small addition to his troubles. As might have been expected, the benefit which he had bestowed upon these men, in placing them above all law, produced no amelioration in their severe and intractable character. Esteeming themselves equal, if not superior to himself, they now proceeded to act as a sort of government, without the least regard to his authority, or that of any other jurisdiction in the land. It was fortunate for him, that their first attempts were of a ridiculous and unpopular character. Conceiving that the commerce, which was then carried on to a considerable extent between Scotland and Spain, was apt to endanger the Protestant principles of their own merchants, they suddenly gave out an edict, forbidding these persons ever again to traffic with the country in question. They also forbade, in a particular manner, that any tallow or wax should ever

again be transported to Spain, whither, it seems, the Scotch merchants had been in the habit of carrying considerable quantities of those articles, to be converted into candles for the shrines of the saints, and for the idolatrous service, as the ministers were pleased to term it, of the mass. Inspired with the same over-pious, though no doubt sincere notions regarding a market which was held in Edinburgh every Monday, they forbade that assemblage, under the pretext that it caused people to begin journies and attend to secular business on Sunday. The people, who felt too particular an interest in these matters to brook interference with them, soon convinced their pastors that they were stepping a little beyond their commission; on which occasion, James is said to have lifted up his hands, and expressed his surprise, that shoemakers and skippers had done what *he* had never been able to do. Such was really the case. But however unable the clergy might be to legislate for the people, they at all times showed themselves possessed both of the power and the will to tyrannise over their sovereign.

Calderwood relates various anecdotes of James, as appropriate to this period. It was the conviction of this ecclesiastical historian, and probably was also that of the clergy in general, that there could be no sincere religion in the King's heart: he had been heard to call Calvin's Institution 'a childish work,' and had sometimes applied the ludicrous epithet of 'the holy sisters' to a certain coterie of religious women who lived in Edinburgh! This was a sentiment quite in the spirit of the age, when, to think differently from the multitude upon any little matter of form, or to utter the most tri-

vial expression of ridicule regarding 'the rigidly righteous,' was enough to procure a sentence of excommunication. But the most curious anecdote remains. It must be given in Calderwood's own words.

'There came from Aberdeen a young woman, called Helen Guthry, daughter to John Guthry, sadler, to admonish the King of his duty. She was so disgusted with the sinnes reigning in the country, swearing, filthy speaking, profanation of the Sabbath, &c., that she could find no rest till she came to the King. She presented a letter to him when he was going to see his hounds. After he had read a little of it, he fell a laughing that he could scarce stand on his feet, and swore horribly, saying the very women could not spare to reprove him. He asked if she was a prophetess. She answered she was a puir simple servant of God, that prayed to make him a servant of God also, that was desirous vice should be punished, and specially murder, which was chiefly craved at his hands: that she could find no rest till she put him in mind of his duty. After the King and council had stormed a while, she was sent to the Queen, whom she found more courteous and humane. Soe many and great were the enormities in the country through impunity and want of justice, that the minds of puir simple young women were disquieted, as ye may see; but the King and court had deaf eares to the crying sinnis.'

But at this crisis, when James was distressed beyond measure by Bothwell and the clergy, there happened an incident which occasioned to him, if possible, still greater uneasiness—namely, the discovery of a conspiracy among the Catholics. Though the

failure of the Spanish armada in 1588, had given a most severe blow to the resources of this body throughout Europe, yet it appears that they never for a day ceased their exertions for the extirpation of heresy. There was now a project on foot, among the Scottish nobles who had appeared in arms on the former occasion, to receive a new Spanish fleet in some of the northern firths, to revive, by means of it, the Catholic church in Scotland, and then to invade England, either with the King, or without him. A gentleman of the name of Ker, brother to Lord Newbattle, was seized on his way out of the country, by the minister of Paisley, and, being searched, was found to carry blank letters, signed with the names of the Earls of Huntly, Errol, and Angus, which, from the terms of the address, were evidently designed for the King of Spain. This was on the 27th of December, 1592. Being brought towards Edinburgh on the succeeding Sunday, the fame of the incident preceded his arrival; and the ministers are recorded to have made short work of their sermons, in order to permit their auditors to go out, 'weill bodin in effeir of weir,' to assist the officers of justice in convoying so monstrous a public enemy to prison. Ker, being examined, confessed the nature and object of his mission, and thereby excited in the public mind a degree of indignation and alarm of which it is now impossible to form any idea. The King, who was enjoying his Christmas with the Earl and Countess of Mar at Alloa, was immediately sent for. The Earl of Angus, one of the guilty nobles, happening to come to Edinburgh, was seized by the provost and confined in Edinburgh Castle. While yet the King was absent, a small knot of

the ministers took it upon them, in virtue of their sovereign power and infallibility, to write letters to all their best friends within a wide circle, desiring them to convene at Edinburgh on the 8th of January, that they might consult about measures for the safety of the church. When James returned, he presumed to chide them in his usual gentle way, for making an unlawful convocation of the lieges. But they were too much engrossed by the magnitude of the end they had in view, to regard *his* individual interests ; and he was soon compelled to go along with the tide of popular opinion, as inspired and guided by these men, at the risk of otherwise losing his life or his crown.

James was exceedingly averse from taking any severe measures with the Catholics. He had, in the first place, strong political reasons for endeavouring to conciliate them ; for they threatened to endeavour all they could to bar his succession to the English crown. It was, in a great measure, as the price of permission to deal leniently with them, that he had lately assented to the demands of the Presbyterians. Whether he secretly entertained any favour for their doctrines or not, it would be difficult to discover : probably, he thought on this subject, as his contemporary Lord Herbert avows himself to have thought, and as every man of just thinking and humanity must now think, namely, that ‘ the points agreed upon on both sides are greater bonds of amity betwixt the two faiths, than the points disagreed on should break them ; ’ and, certainly, in all his polemical works, the only point of the Catholic religion which he seems to hold in abhorrence, is the Pope’s supremacy. Among other reasons which he had for acting leniently in the

present case, were his personal friendship for the parties accused, their attachment and good service to him—Angus had just returned from the North, where he had quelled a serious disturbance—and perhaps a conviction, that the utmost object of their conspiracy was to procure a relaxation of the severe persecution which the established clergy had lately set on foot against them ; a persecution which went the length of making them outlaws in the land, and which was rather increasing than declining in rigour.

But his own sentiments on this subject were too completely the reverse of those entertained by the public in general, to be acted on. Borne along by the popular current, which he had no means of resisting, he was obliged to permit the execution of David Graham of Fintry, a gentleman inculpated by Ker's dispatches ; and he had soon after to put himself at the head of an army, and go to the North, for the purpose of seizing the three Catholic Earls. It was only at a considerable risk, that, on finding the nobles fled from their houses, he could take it upon him to abstain from destroying their property and incarcerating their families ;—the Earl of Angus meanwhile escaped from Edinburgh, not without suspicions of his connivance ;—and but for the prospect of seeing them forfaulted in a parliament which he had called to meet in July, the people would have been thrown, by these symptoms of leniency, into a condition of open rebellion.

The parliament met on the 14th of July ; but as the popular clamours had abated a little by that time, he did not find it necessary to permit the forfeiture to be pronounced : it was found sufficient to adjourn the parliament till November,

and to promise that justice should then be done. James, however, took this opportunity to have Bothwell declared guilty of high treason, and his whole estates declared to be forfeited; but strange to say, at the very time when the Earl was thus, to all appearance, ruined past redemption—on the very day when, to mark his degradation from the rank of a noble and the character of a man, his arms were riven by a herald at the market-cross of Edinburgh—he was on the point of regaining the place he had lost in the King's court and counsels.

For some time before this, the court had been divided into two factions; one of which consisted of James himself, and his faithful and sagacious minister, Lord Thirlstane; the other had the Queen for its head, and comprehended the Duke of Lennox, the Earl of Athole, Lord Ochiltree, and in general all the noblemen and gentlemen of the name of Stewart. The prime cause of the dissention had been Thirlstane's refusal to yield up to her Majesty the regality of Musselburgh, which, as part of the abbacy of Dunfermline, she conceived to belong of right to her. To avoid her displeasure, and relieve the King from domestic disquiet, Thirlstane had retired for some months to enjoy the quiet glades and gardens of his seat of Lethington. In his absence, the Queen and the Stewarts reigned in triumph. James at length alarmed them one day by stealing away from his hounds and hunting attendants, and taking a secret journey to Lethington, where he spent a night with the Chancellor; after which a report arose that Thirlstane was about to return to court. To prevent this, the Stewarts resolved to bring in the

Earl of Bothwell, whom they had all along favoured, and whose cause they now thought it their duty to take in hand, because, from his name being the same with theirs, it was, according to the ideas of that age, almost, if not entirely, their own. *

Accordingly, on the 23d of July, Bothwell was secretly brought to Edinburgh, with a single companion, and lodged in the house of the Countess of Gowrie, behind the palace. During the course of the day, the Earl of Athole (a Stewart), took occasion to come to court, with a considerable band of retainers ; and late at night, the gates of the palace were quietly occupied by these men. When the proper moment arrived, the Countess of Athole, who had been in the palace, bidding the King and Queen good night, passed with her train through a posterior way which led to the house of her mother Lady Gowrie, where she was to lodge for the night. No sooner was that door made patent to her, than Bothwell and his friend Colville entered the precincts of the palace, and, passing up what was called the *Chapel stair*, got into the Long Gallery, at the end of which was the door of the King's chamber. They were disguised : each carried only his naked sword in his hand ; but, to make quite sure of the safety of their persons as they moved along,

* In the reign of James VI., *name* went as great a way in the Lowlands, in dividing and assorting parties, as it did more lately in the Highlands. Wodrow, in his life of Mr David Ferguson, minister of Dumfermline, [*MS. Glasgow University Library*] mentions, that that minister, in a conversation with the King in 1583, said he wished there were no such thing as a surname in Scotland, because there might then be hope of an end to civil broils. The King assented to his wish with great emphasis.

the train of the Countess of Athole had returned with them from the door by which they entered. On their knocking at the King's chamber-door, it was opened by the Earl of Athole. James was at that moment in a small closet off the principal chamber. Before he came forth, Bothwell and Colville had arranged themselves on their knees upon the floor, with their faces towards the closet-door, and their swords laid cross-wise before them. James, who, at their entrance, was in the most awkward and defenceless condition that the reader could suppose, no sooner opened the door of his closet, than he saw fully before him the man who, for three years, had been the pest of his life, and had more than once during that period put it into danger. Alarmed and indignant, but indignation predominating over alarm—as vexation at being found in unkingly dishabille was his most immediate feeling—he threw himself into a chair, and seemed for the moment to have lost his usual regard to life.

“Strike, traitor!” he cried, “strike, and make an end of thy work; I desire not to live any longer!”

Bothwell, continuing on his knees, vehemently affirmed that he came only to entreat for pardon, and put himself into his Majesty's will; to which James replied, that mercy extorted by violence was not mercy, and that it was not the form or practice of petitioners to come with weapons in their hands. At that instant, the lords who had contrived the plot, entered the chamber, and, putting themselves between Bothwell and the King, with one voice entreated for mercy to their suppliant friend. James then perceived the nature of

the enterprise. He asked what they meant— Came they to seek his life?—Let them take it— They could not get his soul. And he finished by crying, “Treason!” They soon succeeded, however, if not in pacifying him, at least in bringing him to hear what Bothwell had to say for himself. The kneeling nobleman then asseverated still more emphatically, that his present enterprise was conceived in no disrespect or evil intention towards his Majesty, but only to procure that justice from the King which he could not obtain from his ministers. He offered to undergo trial for witchcraft, or for seeking the King’s life, directly or indirectly; and, after he should be tried and purged, he professed his willingness to depart from the country, if such should be his Majesty’s desire. In the event of being permitted to remain in Scotland, he promised “to join himself to no other course than his Majesty should command, to attempt no novation of the estate, nor change of officers of estate, and *to like of them whom his Majesty liked.*” *

James had all along been, as the reader has perceived, a sovereign only in name. He had ever been the plaything of one party or another; and his only power, at any time, lay in the comparative strength of the party with which he happened to be connected. Time, in the present case, might have enabled him to devise expedients for resisting Bothwell’s importunities; but, surprised as he was, and completely in the hands of that nobleman and his partisans, he had no course but to receive him again into his court. Being advised to do so by the Earl of Mar, who was his endeared friend, and

* Calderwood, MS.

the only man present not upon the conspiracy, he at length consented to a sort of amnesty with Bothwell, whereby, upon his promise of peaceable behaviour, and non-interference with affairs of state, he promised him a fair trial, and, in case of his being acquitted, a restoration to his estates and rank in society.

Just as this matter was on the point of being adjusted, a band of the citizens of Edinburgh, gathered at the sound of an alarm-bell, and headed by their Provost, Sir Alexander Home of North Berwick, came to the palace, for the purpose of protecting the King. Home, who was a favourite with James, taking his station below the windows of the royal apartment, called for the King to come and speak to him. Bothwell was at deadly feud with all of the name of Home; and he feared that any violence on the part of this intruder might spoil the whole of his project. He therefore requested the King to dismiss him with a soft answer. James, accordingly, leant over the window to hold conference with his friend. Home desired, in the first place, to know his Majesty's circumstances and will, offering that he and his company should rescue him, if he were in restraint, or else lose their lives. James, at the dictation, it is said, of the Earl of Mar, answered, that "the Earl of Bothwell had come in upon him, by his expectation and fore-knowledge, that he had promised fair for the future, and, if he should keep true, he (the King) should keep true to him." Then, thanking him and the citizens for their ready service, he requested them to retire to the church-yard behind the palace, and he should in time give them a further explanation of his circumstances.

They retired accordingly ; and Home, being soon after called back, was told that the King and Bothwell were finally agreed. The citizens of course dispersed ; but it was impossible for Bothwell to omit the opportunity of expressing his rage against the officious Provost. Leaning over the same window, he told Sir Alexander that “ he had done, could do, and would do, as much in the King’s service as any Home in the Merse, and he would reckon with him another time.” * Perhaps no circumstance could have borne more lively testimony to the singularly violent temper of this noted personage.

Bothwell was thus restored to the favour of his sovereign in the style and manner proper to the age. But he was not destined to retain, for any length of time, the advantages he had gained. James was too decidedly implacable towards him, and was held by too insecure a bondage, to continue long in his power. His back had no sooner been turned in compliance with their articles of agreement, than the King began to take measures for shaking him off. He re-appeared on the 10th of August, and was acquitted by an assize of the crime of witchcraft. But the King had by that time laid his plans so well, that the Earl was not permitted to accompany him to the hunting at Falkland. On the 7th of September, in a convention held at Stirling, his Majesty had sufficient influence to procure an absolution from his agreement with Bothwell, and a confirmation of the former sentence of forfeiture. The Earl was then forbidden, by a proclamation, to come within ten

* Calderwood, MS.

miles of any place where his Majesty might be. Thrown into new despair by this harsh procedure, Bothwell entered into an arrangement with his friend the Earl of Athole, for bringing down a Highland army to assist him in forcing justice. But James, by an uncommon exertion, was able to defeat his plan. He no sooner heard that the Earl of Athole was at Doune, than, taking horse at Linlithgow, he rode to meet him, a strong guard going before under Lord Home, with orders to kill Athole if they could reach him; while 'the whole country,' as an old historian expresses it, followed the King to give him their best assistance. Home, who was a Catholic, and at this time most zealous in the royal service, met the Earl of Montrose, one of Athole's associates, whom he took into custody, after some rough usage. When James came up, he was so transported with passion against this nobleman, that he rushed towards him with a drawn sword, and would have taken his life, if he had not been prevented by the Lord Hamilton; * a demonstration of temper which seems to be quite unparalleled in the history of the pacific King. Bothwell, thus deprived of support, retired for a time into the obscurity from which he had lately emerged in so singular a manner. †

* Johnston's Hist. of Scot. MS. Adv. Library.

† Connected with Bothwell's unsuccessful attempt is a simple tale of love, which the contemporary historians are fond of relating, in all its particulars, though it hangs as strangely upon their pages as the Italian tapestry on the old storied walls of Holyroodhouse. It is thus given in the *Historie of King James the Sext* :—

' In this close tyme it fortunit that a gentleman called

Meanwhile, James was precipitated into new quarrels with the clergy. After the parliament in July, which postponed the forfeiture of the Catholic lords for want of evidence, the Synod of Fife, at that time the most furiously zealous in Scot-

Weymis of Logye, being also in credence at court, was delatit as a traffecker with Francis Earl of Bothwell; and he being examinat before King and Counsel, confessit his accusation to be of veritie, that sundry times he had spoken with him, expresslie aganis the King's inhibition proclamit in the contrare, whilk confession he subscriwit with his hand; and because the event of this mater had sik a success, it sall also be praysit by my pen, as a worthie turne, whilk suld in no ways be obscurit from the posteritie, for the gude example; and therefore I have thought gude to insert the same for a perpetual memorie.

'Queen Anne, our noble princess, was servit with diverss gentilwemen of hir awin countrie, and naymlie with ane callit Mres Margarat Twynstoun, to whom this gentilman, Weymes of Logye, bure great honest affection, tending to the godlie band of marriage; the quhilk was honestlie requytet by the said gentilwoman, yea evin in his greatest mister; for howsone she understude the said gentilman to be in distress, and apperantlie by his confession to be puneist to the death, and she having privilege to lye in the Queynis chalmer that same verie night of his accusation, whare the King was also reposing that same night, she came furth of the dure prevelie, bayth the prencis being then at quyet rest, and fast to the chalmer, whare the said gentilman was put in custody to certayne of the garde, and commandit thayme that immediatlie he sould be brought to the King and Queyne, whereunto they geving sure credence, obeyit. But howsone she was come back to the chalmer dure, she desyrit the watches to stay till he sould come furth agayne, and so she closit the dure, and convoyit the gentilman to a window, whare she ministrat a long corde unto him to convoy himself doun upon; and sae be hir gude cheritable help he happilie escapit be the subteltie of loove.'

More than one imagination has been exerted in turning this story to the purposes of fiction. There is an old bal-

land, fulminated a sentence of excommunication against them. James was seriously offended at finding his schemes thus traversed by men altogether destitute of right to interfere with them; and he called the celebrated Mr Robert Bruce before him, to explain the conduct of his brethren. Bruce answered, that none could question the conduct of the Synod but the General Assembly. "Well," said the King, justly provoked at the usurpation which he saw the clergy were determined to carry into effect, "I could have no rest till you got that which you call the discipline of the church established; now, seeing I have found it abused, and none amongst you hath power to stay such disorderly proceedings, I will think of a mean to help it." And he appears, after this, to have resolved upon the restoration of the Episcopal order, as the only rational expedient for procuring that correspondence in the management of church and state which he saw to be necessary to good government.

The Catholic lords thought this a good opportunity for approaching him, and urging in person, the merits of their case against the persecuting disposition of the clergy. Accordingly, on the 12th of October, as he was riding to Lauder to see the Chancellor, they came up to him at Fala, and, falling upon their knees, entreated that they might not be condemned, as the clergy seemed determined that they should, without being heard, but that they might

lad, founded on the incident, called the 'Laird o' Logie,' which is to be found in most collections; and it is the subject of a delightful tale in a modern work, entitled, 'THE ODD VOLUME.'

be allowed a fair trial. James, who certainly was aware of their coming, received them with an appearance of embarrassment, real or affected; but, in the end, would allow them no greater favour than a promise that they should have a trial. They then parted; he to hold a justice-aire at Jedburgh, and they to assemble their friends, to ensure themselves of a fair, or perhaps we should rather say, a favourable assize. When the clergy learned what had taken place, they sent a deputation, charged with the most violent declamations against the lords, and commissioned to insist upon the right which the professors of the gospel had to act as both accusers and assize upon their trial. But so unconstitutional a proceeding, and a demand so contrary to all reason or justice, could not be tolerated. James utterly refused to accede to their wishes. They then resolved to convocate the country in arms, at the place of trial, in order to overawe the administrators of justice and the friends of the accused. James, however, eventually used measures to soften away the asperities of their temper; and an arrangement was at last made, called the *Act of Abolition*, by which the Catholic lords were offered pardon on condition of their renouncing Popery, and finding security for their peaceable behaviour, before the first of February.

It was in the midst of these troubles that James's first child, Prince Henry, saw the light. After having been married upwards of five years, the Queen was delivered at Stirling Castle, on the 19th of February 1593-4. The happy news was received throughout Scotland with the most vivid demonstrations of joy; the people every where vying with each other in expressing their happiness,

by kindling bale-fires, by dancing, and playing on instruments, 'as gif (says honest Patrick Johnston) they had been mad for mirth.'

The excommunicated Earls, as might have been expected, refused to abandon their religion; and James was then obliged to issue an edict commanding them to enter into prison, under the pain of being denounced as rebels, in a parliament which he cited to appear in June.

Before that time arrived, he had another collision with the restless Earl of Bothwell. It was told at the palace, early in the morning of the 2nd of April, that Bothwell had come to Leith during the night, with four hundred horse. James, utterly destitute of a guard or standing army of any kind, was under the necessity of soliciting the town of Edinburgh for their assistance. He accordingly went to the church, and, after the sermon, addressed the people in a speech calculated to inflame them against Bothwell, as the leader of a band of Borderers, who would have no respect for their property, in case of gaining any advantage over him. Thus inspired, the people put on their armour, and accompanied him along the road to Leith. When Bothwell learned the numbers that were marching against him, he thought proper to retire, by Restalrig and Duddingston, to a place called Woomet, near Dalkeith. James now shifted his position to the Borough-Muir, so as to be betwixt Bothwell and the town. After some time, Lord Home led out a party of horse, and attacked the enemy at Edmondstone, but was immediately worsted and pursued back to the main body, by Bothwell's troopers. At sight of that flying body, those around the King recommended that he should

seek refuge for his own person in the town, as a battle was now likely to take place. But he said "he would never quit the field to a traitor." Fortunately, as Bothwell was advancing, his horse fell under him, and occasioned so severe an injury to his person, that he found it prudent to draw off to Dalkeith. Soon after, becoming disheartened by the firm appearance made by the King, he dismissed his forces, and once more went into retirement.

At various times during the late disturbed period, Queen Elizabeth sent ambassadors to urge James to prosecute the Popish lords with vigour. He contrived, however, to evade all her requests, by counter petitions, that she would apprehend, or at least allow no refuge to the Earl of Bothwell, who had often found protection and even assistance in her dominions. On her at last urging him with more than usual vehemency, he pleaded poverty as the only obstacle to his proceedings, and begged that she would assist him with money in this matter, as she had already assisted the Protestants of France and the Low Countries against the Catholics. But she did not think the danger great enough to require that measure of prevention. It is to be inferred, indeed, from her whole behaviour during these troubles, that she took, in a great measure, the same cool view of the guilt of the three Earls which was taken by James himself.

Calderwood, in his minute narrative of the transactions of this time, relates a characteristic anecdote of the King. A troop of horse, which James had contrived to levy, was, on the 30th of May, mustered at Leith Links, to pass in review before him. He went through the ranks, in his familiar

gossiping way, asking the name of each individual soldier. Coming to one whose name was Christison, he said "Gif ye were in Sanct Geilles kirk, with ane psalme buik in your hand, ye wald be called ane haly man." And the grave historian records, that such profane speeches were frequent in his mouth. The truth is, wherever there is a party of ostentatious and immoderate devotees, there will always be a set of people, who, without serious irreligion, will assume the opposite mode of behaviour; and James, whose rational mind revolted at the furious zeal of his own clergy, was induced often, by mere disgust, to express himself in a way that looked profane, while in reality his mind was impressed with much sincere piety. This theory received a thorough illustration in the reign of his grandson Charles II, when the adherents of the court discarded almost every external mark of religion, purely from a principle of antipathy to the puritans, whose conduct in the preceding reign had induced a belief that piety was synonymous with madness and sedition. It is the happiest age which is characterized by a comparatively equal diffusion of religious feeling over all parts of the community.

Bothwell, who had hitherto pretended great zeal for the established church, and who had therefore been considerably favoured by the clergy, was now induced, by despair of that course of action, to attempt one altogether different. He entered into a coalition with the three Catholic Earls. Perhaps, it was that circumstance which first excited sincere anger in James, against the men whom his subjects and clergy had so long urged him to persecute. At the meeting of parliament in June, he

began his speech by saying, that "he had used plaster and medicine hitherto in dealing with his rebellious lords, but, that not availing, he was now to use fire as the last remedy." And he permitted, without further scruple, the long desired act of forfeiture to be passed against the Earls, and made arrangements with the estates assembled, to raise an army for their destruction.

In the rude times under review, before standing armies were known, it was often found impossible to suppress a rebellious noble, by any other plan than that of granting a commission to his chief feudal enemy, empowering him to proceed against the obnoxious person, with the double prospect of gratified revenge and cupidity. James, in prosecuting the Popish Earls, was obliged at first to resort to this dangerous expedient. He granted his commission to the Earls of Argyle and Athole and Lord Forbes, who were the grand enemies of the Huntly interest, and who, for the prospect of dividing that immense estate amongst them, would probably have made no scruple to fight Protestants as well as Catholics. It affords a strange view of the age, that the presbyterian ministers, instead of expressing any disapprobation of what would now be esteemed so unchristian a mode of procedure, sent some of their number to urge Argyle to undertake the King's commission. It was, perhaps, only in consequence of their pious applications to these men, that the Earl did eventually take arms; for it is known that he at first expressed some hesitation on account of his age, which was only eighteen.

Meanwhile, on the 6th of September, the baptism of Prince Henry was celebrated at Stirling

Castle, in the presence of ambassadors from most of the Protestant princes of Europe, and in a style of magnificence suitable to the birth and prospects of so illustrious a child. The Queen of England was represented by the Earl of Sussex as god-mother; in which relation, it will be recollected, she also stood to King James himself. The established clergy were not permitted to act so prominent a part in this solemnity as at the Queen's coronation. The ceremony was performed by David Cunningham, who still retained, notwithstanding all the late proceedings against Episcopacy, the title of Bishop of Aberdeen; and the only other ministers present were men well known to be more devoted to the King than the kirk.

The young Earl of Argyle moved, about the end of September, from his own territory in the West Highlands, accompanied by vassals and friends to the amount of six thousand men, of whom fifteen hundred were musketeers, of regular appointment, while the rest were only untrained Highlanders, armed with bows and arrows, or with two-handed swords—weapons which remained in use among that primitive people for several ages after they had been abandoned every where else. This immense host travelled through the whole space of the central Highlands, till they came to Glenlivat, a valley within two days journey of Strathbogie, the chief stronghold of the Earl of Huntly. If they had been a little more deliberate in their march, they would have been joined by the Forbeses, and other clans, who, from feudal hate to Huntly, were inclined to adventure in this quarrel; but Argyle was so confident in his present force, that he wished no longer to delay an

engagement with the enemy. He sent a taunting message to Strathbogie, warning the Earl that he was about to visit him: Huntly answered, that “he sould be porter himself, and sould mak the passages of the palace patent unto him before his coming, and sould welcome him by the way, as effeired.”* He then, with the assistance of the Earl of Errol, mustered the whole of his dependants, to the amount of twelve or fourteen hundred men, chiefly gentlemen and their servants, and almost all on horseback—whom he ‘exhorted to defend him in his just cause at that time; for he took God to witness that he had no other cause to fight against the barbarous enemy, but first for the glory of God, and for the liberty of his and their consciences, which were enthralled by such as were pernicious enemies to all truth and verity,’ and who had at this time, by false acts, animated the King against him. He assured them that he loved and revered the King with heart and mind, as a good subject, and would never be prevailed upon to enter the field against him, even in a just cause. But, ‘since they had to do with an enemy, in whom was neither fear of God, nor obedience to the Prince, nor good manners at all, he besought them there, in God’s name, to behave valiantly.’ He then led forward his forces against Argyle, whom he encountered at a place called Balrinnies, on the afternoon of the 3d of October.

The Presbyterian leader was somewhat disconcerted at the sight of Huntly’s army, for he had been led to believe that no stand whatever would

* As was consistent with proper etiquette.—*Historie of King James the Sext, Bann. Club, Ed. p. 339.*

be made against him. As his position, however, was very advantageous, (on the side of a hill full of moss and bogs), and as he had advantage of both sun and wind, he resolved upon fighting. Huntly, whose part it rather was to have hesitated, from the comparative slenderness of his force, sent forward a vanguard, consisting of two hundred horse, under the command of the Earl of Errol, and courageously led on the remainder in person. He had four pieces of artillery on carts, which he caused to be kept concealed from the view of the enemy till the moment when they should have approached near enough to give an effective fire. His progress was slow, partly from the steepness of the hill, and partly from the heath and bogs which rendered it difficult to the feet of his horse; but he at length arrived within the proper distance. Then suddenly causing his vanguard to recede from the front of the artillery, he fired them off with great effect against the massive battalions of Argyle; who, ignorant that he possessed this means of offence, and regarding cannon in the abstract with a sort of superstitious terror, fell flat on their faces, and could not be prevailed upon to rise again so long as the noise continued. To improve his advantage, Huntly caused his vanguard at this moment to make a detour to the right, so as to fall in upon the enemy's flank. They did so with all the speed possible on such broken ground; but before they accomplished their object, the Highland leaders, rousing their men from the ground, caused them to throw off a flight of arrows at the advancing horse, such as palpably darkened the air, if we are to believe the report of some eye-witnesses, for a quarter of an hour. Errol's troop,

nevertheless, dashed in upon the rear of the Presbyterian army, and began an unequal contest, which might have soon ended in his complete destruction, if Huntly had not at that moment advanced, with all the remainder of his forces, and distracted the chief attention of the Celtic leaders to the front. A general and most destructive fight then took place. The Lowland cavaliers every where found advantage over the ill-armed Highlanders, and produced a dreadful slaughter; but the Highlanders, nevertheless, contrived to give their assailants a number of severe wounds. At length, after two hours of hard fighting, the legions of Argyle began to give way before those of Aberdeenshire; and a flight soon after commenced, which all the efforts of the chiefs were unable to restrain. Casting away at once arms and clothing, and never once looking behind them, the despairing Highlanders ascended the hill, where no horse could follow, and, descending the other side, sought their way home. A small portion, chiefly natives of the Western Isles, retired in a more respectable fashion, under the charge of the Chief of Maclean, who, clad in a jack and murrion, and armed with the primitive weapon called a Danish axe, had acted on this day as Argyle's lieutenant, and behaved with great gallantry. Argyle himself was hurried off the field, weeping with rage at the bad success of his arms.

In this battle of Glenlivet, or Balrinnies, full five hundred of Argyle's forces were slain, including the Laird of Lochnell and his brother, heirs-presumptive to the commander. On Huntly's side fell Patrick Gordon of Auchindown, uncle to the Earl, with a small number of men; while Errol and many others were severely wounded. It

is certainly to be regretted, that the zeal of the clergy, moved as it was by the best intentions, should have led to a slaughter so extensive as this, and of which the necessity was so doubtful, even supposing their ends to have been expedient. There is at least something very horrible in the idea of enlisting the bad passions of a rude people in a quarrel which was not properly their own, and thus, as it were, attempting to perform God's work by the agency of fiends. Assuredly, no cause, however sacred, could justify means so very inconsistent with the principles of humanity, so adverse to the precepts of religion itself.

James was at Dundee, preparing, in his own person, for an expedition to the North, when the young Earl of Argyle, accompanied by only two men out of all his late force, arrived, travel-worn and exhausted, to relate the news of his defeat. The King immediately marched northward, with the small force he had already collected, being afraid that a little time might allow the Catholic lords to become too powerful for him. But by the time he reached Aberdeen, he learned that Huntly and Errol were so much weakened by the severe conflict they had had with Argyle, as to be unable to make head a second time, and that they were now willing to quit the kingdom. All that then remained was to march into the country over which these nobles exercised a territorial jurisdiction, and put in force the late act of parliament, by casting down their strongholds, and taking caution from their dependants. For some time, James was prevented from doing this by the state of the weather, and by the slowness with which his levies came in to him; but he at length accomplish-

ed it, in January 1594-5. Strathbogie and Slaines Castles, the seats of the Earls of Huntly and Errol, were destroyed. The Earls retired beyond seas, upon a composition; but their vassals were more severely handled, for according to the report of a very simple annalist, 'all gentlemen war appardonit for payment of sowmes of money, and the puir war puneist to the death.' The ladies of the rebel lords were permitted, however, to retain the rents of their estates; the Countess of Huntly being the daughter of the late Duke of Lennox, and high in the King's favour. Indeed, to ensure that the business of quieting the country should be transacted with a sufficiently tender regard to the interests of this esteemed person, he left her brother, the young Duke of Lennox, as his lieutenant, when he himself found it necessary to retire to the South.

The country was now in some measure pacified; and, to add to James's triumphs, his old enemy the Earl of Bothwell at last found it expedient to seek a refuge abroad. A year of tranquillity ensued, marked by no event of importance, except an unsuccessful attempt on the part of the Queen and a faction of the courtiers, to deprive the Earl of Mar of the custody of Prince Henry. On the 3d of October, the King and country were deprived of the services of the Chancellor, Lord Thirlstane, who, after an administration of about ten years, made 'a godly end' at his house of Lauder Fort, much lamented by all ranks of men, but especially by the King. James honoured his memory with a copy of verses, which, as Dr Robertson remarks, 'when compared with the compositions of the age, are far from being inelegant.'

CHAPTER VIII.

THE OCTAVIANS—TUMULT OF THE SEVENTEENTH OF DECEMBER—PUBLICATION OF THE BASILICON DORON.

1596—1599.

IN January 1595-6, James resolved upon a measure, which eventually had a very material effect upon the character of his government, and, in a more particular manner, upon the fortunes of the church. Finding, as he himself declares in a proclamation, that the rents of his crown were in a state of confusion and decay, and that, by the maladministration of his finances, he was at last arrived at such a pitch of poverty, that 'there was neither wheat nor beir (barley), silver nor other rent, to serve his house sufficiently in bread and drink, or otherways;' he selected eight gentlemen of the law, the most acute in talent, and the most expert in business, upon whom he devolved the whole management of his revenue in every department, binding himself, upon the word of a prince, to interfere in no manner with their proceedings, and allowing them the important privilege of filling up every vacancy that might occur in their own number. So extensive were the powers which seemed to be conferred upon this

body, or rather so completely did the King appear to have resigned his own power into their hands, that the people, on hearing the proclamation, universally remarked, that he had only left to himself the name of sovereign. The gentlemen of his court had the same impression ; and it was generally supposed that he must now lose the services of even that small portion of his subjects, from inability to hold out the proper emoluments. But the results were quite of a contrary nature.

The first acts of the Octavians—so they were popularly called from their number—had reference only to their proper business, the public finances. By and by, however, being enabled, by the control they acquired over money matters, to extend their views further, they began to seize the principal offices of the state, and to exercise a more direct influence over the machinery of government. The offices of Treasurer, King's Advocate, Comptroller, and Lord Privy Seal, successively fell into their hands : their president was only prevented from gaining the Chancellorship, which was the very highest office in the kingdom, by the circumstance of his being obnoxious to public suspicion on account of Catholicism. Their rapid advances to supreme power excited the alarm of the church, because a moiety of them were Catholics—and the hostility of the nobles, in so far as they were all younger brothers, or men of no family ; whereas, to give an office to any other man than a peer, was looked upon in Scotland as something monstrous. Yet, notwithstanding all the outcry raised against them, they kept their places, and managed the affairs of the kingdom with an amazing degree of vigour. Talent, the naked quality for which

the King had selected them, was found, even in this rude age, so far to transcend all merely external pretensions.

The arrangement was found to be, in every respect, a fortunate one for James. It supplied him with what he most wanted in personal character, the power of saying, "No," to unreasonable requests, and of acting with firmness in the protection of his prerogative against the frequent invasions which were made upon it. Nor was he exposed to the least danger of having his power altogether transferred into the hands of the Octavians. They were forced, by the hostility of the nobles, the church, and the people, to keep close under his wing: their power depended too immediately and too exclusively upon his personal will, to put himself in the least danger. In effect, his government acquired, by this arrangement, all the advantages of vigour and accuracy; and there was now exhibited, for the first time, in Scotland, a ministry selected upon principles at all approaching to those which dictate the construction of a British cabinet in modern times.

It was hardly to be expected that the clergy would behold such an alteration in the government without great alarm. This order of men entertained sentiments on the subject of an administration not less exclusive than those entertained by the nobility. The latter conceived that birth and following were the only requisites in a ministry: the clergy thought it enough if they were sound Protestants and favourable to the church. Hitherto, it had been only by the weakness of James's government, that the church acquired or held its privileges; of course, the clergy supposed that this immense

addition to its strength augured unfavourably to their long possession of its privileges. They, therefore, took every opportunity of inveighing against the Octavians ; declaimed against the King on every occasion for his overlooking religious principle in the selection of his advisers ; and did not scruple, in their private interviews, to rebuke him in language of the most poignant severity.

But it is evident that the clergy had now arrived at that pitch when vaulting ambition overleaps itself, and falls on the other side. Prosperity had, to a certain extent, spoilt them. The power they had acquired over the public mind ; their exemption from the control of the state ; the deference paid to them of late years by the government, which *ventured upon no measure without begging their consent* ; the rapturous idea in which they lived, that they were the immediate officers of the Divinity :—all these circumstances had had their proper effect in inspiring them with that degree of pride which bodes a fall. One circumstance, out of hundreds which are recorded in their church-histories, will be sufficient to prove this to the satisfaction of the reader.

James was now anxious to restore the Catholic lords. Finding that the persecution with which he had been compelled to visit them, alienated from him the affections of the English Catholics, and that, by their continuing longer abroad, they were in danger of really attaching themselves to the service of his enemies, he conceived it to be best, both for himself and his country, that they should be permitted to return. As it was necessary to gain the consent of the church to this scheme, he took an opportunity, one day, of sound-

ing Mr Robert Bruce, as to the view which his brethren would probably take of such a measure. Bruce, who had been the prime instigator of the Argyle expedition against Huntly, and who was virtually an archbishop in the church, expressed, as might be expected, great dislike to the scheme. He was at length, however, so far softened as to say, that if Angus and Errol would profess the reformed religion, *they* might perhaps be allowed to come back. Huntly being the man in whom James was most concerned, he condescended to argue with Bruce in favour of that nobleman, and even had the boldness to say at last, that if he brought any of them in, he would bring them all. "Well, well," said this proud puritan, "I see your resolution is to take Huntly in favour. Mark, however, sir, what I say. If you do so, I will oppose it. You must either lose Huntly or me. Take your choice between us, for both you cannot keep!" It is said that, though James had formerly entertained a sincere friendship for Bruce—whom, as has been seen, he trusted a good deal while in Denmark, and even employed to put the crown upon his queen—this exhibition of intolerance and pride was too much for even his nature, and he henceforth studied different measures with this order of his subjects.*

In August 1596, James succeeded in procuring the restoration of the Catholic Lords, notwithstanding all that the clergy could urge against it. Inflamed to the last degree by this offence against their authority, they established a small oligarchy

* Spottiswood, 417. See also Maxwell's *Burden of Issachar*.

of their number in Edinburgh, to be constantly on the watch for methods of annoying him. But they only precipitated their own destruction. A minister of the name of Black, holding forth at St Andrews, used language of more than usual intemperance in inveighing against all the late public measures ; and, resolved to make an example of him, James summoned him before the privy council. The ministers, whose proper course it would have been to resign Black to his resentment, unfortunately for themselves, made it a common cause, and came forward in a body to defend him. A protracted dispute then took place between the King and the church, regarding the royal right to judge of any thing uttered in the pulpit. The clergy affirmed that, in all such ecclesiastical matters, they had a right to judge, at least in the first instance ; but James very reasonably objected, that, if they committed secular crimes in the pulpit, it was the temporal courts which should try them. After much wrangling, however, his good nature was so much wrought upon, that he offered to pardon Black, if they would only pass from the declination which they had presented against the jurisdiction of his privy council ; an arrangement which would have exactly undone the whole process, and left the royal and ecclesiastical powers where they were before. But, in the hope of establishing an exemption for their order from the summons of that court, they obstinately held out against his offered kindness, and proceeded to measures more turbulent than ever.

Upon the 17th of December, while the public mind was, from these causes, in an exceedingly feverish state, the King was sitting in the Upper

Tolbooth, amidst the Lords of Session, when a resolution was taken by the commissioners of the church, to present to him a serious public remonstrance against his late measures. Mr Robert Bruce and Lord Lindsay were the chief persons in the committee appointed to carry this remonstrance; and while they were absent, a minister regaled the multitude with an application of the story of Haman to the King. On entering the place where his Majesty sat, Bruce proclaimed, that they were sent by the noblemen and gentlemen convened in the adjacent church, to bewail the dangers in which religion was brought by the late proceedings against ministers and true professors. "What dangers see you?" said James sharply. Bruce answered, by relating a series of circumstances too long for repetition. The King replied, by asking who they were that durst convene against his proclamation. Then Lindsay struck in with an impassioned declaration, that *they durst do more than convene*, and they would not suffer religion to be overthrown. James, justly offended, and seeing a great number of unmannerly people thronging upon his presence, rose and retired to the Lower Tolbooth, causing the doors of communication to be closed behind him.

When the commissioners returned, and related the bad success of their embassy, the minds of the assemblage, previously excited in no small degree by the prelections of the ministers, were thrown into a state of dreadful perturbation. Lindsay declared, "It shall either be theirs or ours"—when there ensued 'a clamour and a lifting of hands, and none could hear what another spake.'*

* Spottiswood.

individual was at length heard to exclaim, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon!" Others cried, "Arms, arms!" while a person of the court faction, observing the tumult, and willing to fool it to the top of its bent, cried in at the door, "Fy, save yourselves;" on which there was a rush to the street, and all who could command corslets or weapons put themselves into 'effeir of weir,' and thronged hither and thither in search of the enemy, which existed only in their own imaginations. One immense party crowded to the doors of the house where the King was sitting and, exclaiming, "Bring out the wicked Haman!" in allusion to the text of the late sermon, showed a determination to put an end to his life. James was now seriously alarmed, and not without reason. He sent a messenger, however, by a secret way, to bring his friend the Earl of Mar, with a party, from the castle; which, soon after arriving, overawed the multitude. The Convener of the Trades of Edinburgh, at the same time, did what he could to allay the fury of his fellow-citizens. The tumult finally subsided in a manner almost as unaccountable as that in which it began; and the most of those who had been concerned, sneaked home, as if ashamed of the irritation into which they had been betrayed. When all was quiet, James himself ventured forth from the Tolbooth, and went down the middle of the High Street to the Palace, guarded by the magistrates, and accompanied by some of those very Octavians whose counsels had been the ostensible cause of the tumult.

This affair, which was long after remembered under the epithet of 'the Seventeen' Day of De-

ember,' proved a staggering blow to the pretensions of the clergy. The King did not appear at first very much offended by it. On reflection, however, he seems to have conceived the idea that, by stigmatizing it as treason, and affecting to be enraged beyond all mollification, he might use it as a capital point of reference, whereby to establish the evil tendency of a church cast loose from all civil power, and break the spirit of those secular persons who fortified the ministers in their demands. Retiring, therefore, early next morning, to Linlithgow, he left a proclamation to be uttered at the market-cross of Edinburgh, commanding all persons not regular inhabitants to remove immediately, and ordering that the courts of law should thenceforth be held at Perth. On a submission being made to him two days after by the magistrates, he refused to listen to it. His immediate attendants, taking their cue from him, talked of razing the city to the foundation, and erecting a pillar on its site, with an inscription relating the story of its misdemeanours. He also caused his privy council to declare all who had been concerned in the tumult guilty of treason.

When the citizens learned the extent of his indignation, they at once fell to that pitch of humility which he desired, and, being much more willing to want the *gospel* than the LAW, gave up their clergy, who immediately fled to England. They further offered to give his Majesty thenceforward the power of chusing their magistrates, and also to take no ministers who should not be honoured with his approbation. For a long time, however, he kept them in suspense as to his intentions re-

garding them ; but, at length, when he thought them sufficiently depressed, he relaxed a little, and permitted them to remain in possession of their former privileges.

With the clergy as a body, he made much harder terms. Placed by their imprudence in possession of considerable power, which soon began to increase very fast, as his prospect of succeeding to Elizabeth became more near, he contrived, in the course of the three ensuing years, to do away with a great number of the worse features of presbyterial government, and even to get a moderate sort of Episcopacy established in the country. It is true, he did not succeed in these objects without many struggles and much opposition. Some of the ministers even contested every inch of ground with him. One day, in the assembly-room of the synod of Fife, when his measure for allowing a certain number of the ministers to vote in parliament was under discussion, David Ferguson, the oldest clergyman in the kingdom, irreverently compared it to the Trojan horse, and warned his brethren how they broke down the walls of their sanctuary to admit any such deceptious intruder. " Busk, busk, busk him," cried a still more fanciful orator, in allusion to the disguised form into which the measure was thrown, " busk him as bonily as ye can, and bring him in as fairly as ye will, we can still see him weel eneuch—we still see the horns of his mitre ! " On another occasion, Andrew Melville, whose free remonstrances to the King are celebrated in Scottish history, appearing in a General Assembly, although he had been commanded by James to remain away, the King took him to task for his disobedience. But An-

drew, according to the report of his nephew James, [See his Diary,] discharged his conscience to the King '*after the auld manner,*'—that is to say, in the style of fervid invective peculiar to him—concluding by putting his hands round his neck, and saying, "Sir, tak you this head, and gar cut it aff, gif ye will; ye sall sooner get it then I betray the cause of Chryst." Yet these expressions of dissatisfaction were chiefly confined to those persons who had been in the habit of leading the church-courts, and who had greater occasion to lament the change, as it tended to abolish their power. When the whole church is taken into account, the north as well as the south, it is probable that the moderate Episcopacy introduced by the King was sincerely approved by the majority, as tending to produce better order, and prevent the whole power of the church from falling into the hands of a few persons, such as those who had lately all but possessed it.

Some historians, in detailing this part of James's life, have inveighed against him with great rancour, for having taking advantage of so slight a tumult as that of the 17th of December, in order to get the clergy humiliated. Allowing, however, that the tumult was slight—which it by no means appears to have been—James was surely as justifiable in making this use of it, as the clergy had been in taking advantage of his weakness all along, and of every accidental disturbance in the country, to procure the extension of their privileges. Those who acquire wealth by unfair means, have no reason to complain, when the individuals from whom it has been ravished, succeed, by similar methods, in getting it back.

The life of James, between 1596 and 1600, is marked by only one incident of note, the publication of his book of instructions to his eldest son, called *The Basilicon Doron*. He had scarcely been a father ere he set about the composition of this treatise. The uncertainty of his own life, which led him to fear that he should never have it in his power to communicate oral instruction to his son, was his chief reason for writing the work so many years before it could be applied to its ostensible use ; and in order that it might be sure to reach its proper destination, he caused seven copies of it to be printed, each of which he deposited in the hands of some trusted officer. These persons were enjoined strict secrecy as to the existence of such a treatise, for it contained some explanations of the author's mind on matters of church government, which he did not wish to be divulged till his plans were a little better matured. Unfortunately, however, a gentleman whom he had employed to transcribe it for the press, showed the original to Mr Andrew Melville, who forthwith selected the passages unfavourable to the church, and, throwing them before the synod in Fife, spread a prodigious alarm amongst the clergy throughout Scotland. James, seeing that these isolated passages gave an impression which the whole was not calculated to convey, then saw fit to consent to the publication of the work, which accordingly took place in 1599.

The *Basilicon Doron* is by many degrees the most respectable of all James's prose compositions. It consists of three parts ; one of which refers to religion, a second to the art of government, and a third to personal conduct. The whole is written in a

style which, however unsuitable to the taste of the present age, was then thought excellent, and may still be deemed good. In regard to matter and sentiment, it is entitled to even higher praise. James, according to unquestionable authority, was a good father. His bearing in that capacity was more manly and respectable than in any other. He accordingly displays, in his instructions to his son, a more solemn cast of thinking than in any other work ; he blurts out fewer of those grotesque fancies which deform so many of the rest of his compositions ; his whole mind seems to have been unconsciously elevated in the performance of this interesting duty. The book is a short one, because, according to his own explanation, it is difficult to get princes to read in youth, from the number of amusements which distract them, and equally difficult in mature age, from the perplexities of public business. As the whole book, however, is not more brief, than the individual sentiments are concise, it contains a prodigious quantity of matter. The profound and varied learning of the author is proved by a thick margin of authorities, partly from scripture, and partly from the classic writers.

Some passages of the Basilicon Doron are curious, as containing expositions of certain points in the King's character and history. We learn from one, that, in the earlier part of his reign, he was induced to pardon a great number of offenders, in the hope that his kindness would make them thenceforward good subjects, but that, in reality, he only brought the country into greater disorder by his clemency, and got no thanks from any one for his benevolent intentions. He tells us at another

place, that he ever found the persons who had taken his mother's part against himself in his minority, become, afterwards, his own best friends; an insinuation that he believed it possible to make the English Catholics good subjects. He also remarks, what is historically true, that all those who took a conspicuous part against his mother came to a wretched end.

There is great humanity, and much correct feeling, in the following directions: 'And, although the crime of oppression be not in this rank of unpardonable crimes, yet the over-common use of it in this nation, as if it were a virtue, especially by the greatest rank of subjects in the land, requireth the King to be a sharp censurer thereof. Be diligent, therefore, to try, and awful to bear down, the horns of proud oppressors: embrace the quarell of the poor and distressed, as your own particular, thinking it your greatest honour to oppress the oppressors: care for the pleasure of none; neither spare ye any pains in your own person, to see their wrongs redressed. Remember the honourable style given to my grandfather of worthy memory (James V.), in being called *the poor man's King*. And as the most part of a King's office standeth in deciding that question of *meum* and *tuum* among his subjects, so remember, when ye sit in judgment, that the throne ye sit on is God's, as Moses saith, and sway neither to the right hand nor to the left; either loving the rich, or pitying the poor. Justice should be blind and friendless: it is not on the judgment-seat ye should reward your friends, or seek to cross your enemies.'

He makes a curious observation regarding the Borders. There are two reasons, he says, for

giving no directions about their management. One is, that, if his son becomes sovereign of the whole island, 'according to God's right and his lineal descent,' then the Borders will be in the middle of his empire, and as easily ruled as any other part of it. If, on the other hand, he does not accede to that inheritance, then it is equally unnecessary to trouble him with directions, for he will, in that case, *never get leave to brook Scotland either—no, not his own head, whereon the crown should stand.* James feared, with great justice, that, if the Catholics succeeded in their aim of getting the Spanish Infanta to succeed Elizabeth, his present kingdom must also fall into the hands of that usurper: A notable reason for his leniency to the Catholic Lords, in opposition to the wishes of his subjects.

There is one passage in the Basilicon Doron, which excited no little remark at the time: it refers to the individuals whom the reader has seen arrayed in such violent opposition to the King in almost all the acts of his government—the leaders of the native clergy. On this subject, the royal author speaks with a degree of warmth and earnestness proportioned to the annoyance which he had received from those zealous defenders of the Presbyterian church-polity. There is also, in what he says, a candour and simplicity, an unhesitating expression of real feeling, which, though it can scarcely be expected to decrease the reverence borne by the Scottish people in general towards the fathers of their church, must yet have its effect upon the mind which simply endeavours to form a correct historical estimate of the motives of the two grand parties. 'In Scotland,' says the

royal author, ' the reformation of religion being extraordinarily wrought by God, and many things being inordinately done by a popular tumult and rebellion, of such as were blindly doing the work of God, but clogged with their own passions and particular respects, as well appeared by the destruction of our policy, and not proceeding from the prince's order, as it did in our neighbour country of England, as likewise in Denmark, and sundry parts of Germany ; some fiery-spirited men in the ministry got such guiding of the people in that time of confusion, as, finding the taste of government sweet, they begouth to fantasie to themselves a democratic form of government ; and, having by the iniquity of the time, been over-well baited in the wrack, first of my grandmother, and next of mine own mother, and after usurping the liberty of the time in my long minority, settled themselves so fast in that imagined democracy, as they fed themselves with the hope to become *tribuni plebis* ; and so in a popular government to bear the sway of all the rule. And for this cause there never rose faction in the time of my minority, nor trouble sen-syne, but they that were upon that factious part were ever careful to persuade and allure these unruly spirits among the ministry, to spouse that quarrel as their own : where-through I was oft calumniated in their popular sermons, not for any evil or vice in me, but because I was a King, which they thought the highest evil. And because they were ashamed to profess this quarrel, they were busy to look narrowly in all my actions ; and I warrant you a mote in my eye, yea a false report, was matter enough for them to work upon : and yet, for all their cunning, whereby they pre-

tended to distinguish the lawfulness of the office from the vice of the person, some of them would sometimes snapper out well grossly with the truth of their intentions, informing the people that all kings and princes were naturally enemies to the liberty of the church, and could never patiently bear the yoke of Christ: with such sound doctrine fed they their flocks. And because the learned, grave, and honest men of the ministry, were ever ashamed and offended with their temerity and presumption, pressing, by all good means, by their authority and example, to reduce them to a greater moderation, there could be no way found out so meet in their conceit as parity in the church: whereby the ignorants were emboldened (as bairdes) to cry the learned, godly and modest, out of it: parity, the mother of confusion, and enemy to unity, which is the mother of order. For, if, by the example thereof, once established in the ecclesiastical government, the politick and civil estate should be drawn to the like, the great confusion that thereupon would arise may be easily discerned. Take heed, therefore, my son, to such Puritans, very pests in the church and common-wealth, whom no deserts can oblige, neither oaths or promises bind, breathing nothing but sedition and calumnies, aspiring without measure, railing without reason, and making their own imaginations, without any warrant of the word, the square of their consciences. I protest before the great God—and, since I am here as upon my testament, it is no place to lie in—that ye shall never find in any Hieland or Border thieves greater ingratitude, and moe lies and vile perjuries, than with these fanatick spirits. And suffer not the principals of them

to brooke your land, if ye like to sit at rest ; *except ye would keep them for trying your patience, as Socrates did an evil wife.*

He concludes this department of the subject, by recommending it to his son to establish, or continue the establishment of a moderate Episcopacy, as the only form of church-government which could consist with order among the clergy themselves, 'or the peace of a commonwealth and well-ruled monarchy.' 'Cherish no man,' says he, 'more than a good pastor; hate no man more than a proud puritan.' 'What is there,' he exclaims at another place, 'betwixt the pride of a glorious Nebuchadnezzar, and the preposterous humility of one of the proud Puritans, claiming to their parity, and crying, "We are all but vile worms," and yet will judge and give law to their King, but will be judged nor controuled by none? Surely there is more pride under such a one's black bonnet, than under Alexander the Great his diadem, as was said of Diogenes in the like case.'

Many amusing and many wise instructions occur in the third part of the work, which refers to personal conduct. He recommends frequent dining in public, and says, 'In the form of your meat-eating, be neither uncivil like a gross Cynic, nor affectedly mignarde like a dainty dame; but *eat in a manly, round, and honest fashion.*' He tells the prince, 'to take no heed of his dreams;' to wear his clothes 'in a careless, yet comely form;' to use, in common speech, 'no booke language, or pen and ink-horn terms;' and never to stake more in gaming than he would choose to cast among pages. Among a multitude of other advices, he insists, with a vehemence which goes far

to prove the purity of his own life, upon the virtue of continence, and, in a particular manner, implores his son, in the event of his marriage, to pay an inviolable regard to the nuptial vow. Every such transgression he esteems as a serious mischief to society, and also to the parties concerned, besides being, what few ever remember that it is, an infraction of the divine law. And, as a mere proof of the inexpediency of such vices, he instances the illegitimate children of his grandfather James V., one of whom (the Earl of Moray) 'bred the wrack of the lawful daughter and heir' of that monarch, while the child of another (the Earl of Bothwell) had been the pest of his own life for several years.

Such are a few of the more remarkable passages in the Basilicon Doron, selected rather with the view of affording historical light, or mere amusement to the reader, than with the hope of giving a favourable impression of the literary merit of the work. To claim in this age any approbation for King James as an author, may perhaps excite a smile. Yet, there is a good deal of truth in what Mr D'Israeli says regarding him, that he has more critics than readers. Johnson said of a dull novel by Congreve, that he would rather praise it than read it; but the public seems to have been animated by less benevolent reasons in regard to King James, and resolved rather to condemn than to peruse. It must at least be said, that, in his own age, before Bacon and Cowley had improved the national taste in English prose composition, the literary efforts of this monarch were among the very best extant. It is an historical fact, that this very Basilicon Doron communicated to the English people an impression of the author's abilities

and character, which was highly favourable to his views of becoming their sovereign. There is a degree of nervousness, precision, and smoothness in the style, which marks it as the production of a good intellect. Occasionally, too, there is play of fancy, that shows the wit and the poet. Piety is abundant; but it has the merit, rare in that age, of being a tranquil, rational sort of piety, the piety of a gentleman and a man of genius. In the Basilicon Doron, good sense, and a shrewd observation of life and its ways, are the predominant features. And, assuredly, it would be difficult to point out any code of morality in that age, or for a century and a half later, which is either purer in its sentiments, or more elegant in its diction. Indeed, but for the limited nature of its object—the instruction of a young prince—even at this day it might be put into the hands of youth, as a safe guide to virtue and happiness.

CHAPTER IX.

THE GOWRY CONSPIRACY.

1600.

AMIDST the tranquillity—for such it was, comparatively speaking—in which James spent the latter years of his residence in Scotland, there occurred a transaction, in which his dignity was more violently disturbed, and his life also more imminently threatened, than on any former occasion. This was the affair known by the epithet of the Gowry Conspiracy, which occurred at Perth, on the 5th of August 1600.

The reader will readily call to mind the Earl of Gowry, who was executed at Stirling in 1584, for his concern in the Raid of Ruthven. That nobleman left a large family, in which there were five sons. After the expulsion of the Earl of Arran in 1585, James did all that he could to compensate for a harsh measure which he could not formerly prevent, by restoring the title and estates to Gowry's eldest son, and taking all the younger members of the family immediately under his own protection. Two of the young ladies he placed in confidential stations under his consort; others he married to respectable noblemen—one, in par-

ticular, to his most favoured courtier, and the premier nobleman of Scotland, Ludovick Duke of Lennox.

The eldest son, dying in 1586, was succeeded by his next brother, John, a young man of talent, accomplishments, and the most prepossessing exterior, but who, it afterwards appeared, cherished passions which are not calculated to lead to happiness. This nobleman, when yet under age, was induced to engage in the intrigues of the Catholic nobles, mainly, it is supposed, through the influence of the Earl of Athole, who was married to one of his sisters. He afterwards went abroad, along with his younger brother Alexander, and completed his education at the famed university of Padua, where, among other branches of learning, he studied the pretended science of magic, for which Italy was then distinguished above all other countries. Returning in 1599, he was received by Elizabeth, as he passed through England, with marks of high distinction, allowed a retinue of guards, and in every respect treated as if he had been the Prince of Wales. Her Majesty's only reason for doing so was unquestionably to pique the King of Scots, Gowry being a remote pretender to the succession. This eclat, however, acting upon a mind naturally ambitious, and perhaps strengthening impressions which had been previously made upon it by the responses of Italian conjurors, seems to have inspired the young man with a most extravagant notion of his own destiny, and to have disposed him to a conspiracy against his native sovereign, to which the recollection of his father's fate was no doubt a strong additional incentive.

His reception in Scotland, where he arrived in May 1600, was of a nature calculated to confirm such a mind in its wildest schemes. The fame of his accomplishments, his handsome person, and of Elizabeth's kindness to him, preceded his arrival, and, being associated in the minds of the multitude with a recollection that his father was a sort of martyr in the cause of Prebyterianism and popular government, every where excited a lively interest in his favour. Like every other ambitious man, even while he listened with gratification to the applauses of the crowd, he secretly despised the flatterers ; he remarked, as he made his way through the mob which received him at Edinburgh, "Pshaw, there were as many, I believe, to see my father's execution at Stirling." Still, these marks of popular favour must have tended to foment that very ambition which enabled him to despise them.

What precise form his views assumed, has not yet, and probably never will be discovered. Though he no doubt cherished some vague and indefinite design of revenging his father's death, it cannot be made to appear that he designed to murder the King. The more probable supposition is, that he intended an enterprise like that of his father and others at Ruthven, whereby, having secured the royal person, he might revolutionize the cabinet in favour of himself and friends. But the most extraordinary thing about this conspiracy, is, that he does not appear to have had, besides his own brother, more than one associate ; and with that associate—the famous Logan of Restalrig—he was only on the point of making the concluding arrangements, when he and his brother, of themselves, and without the foreknowledge of a single servant, put the

plot into execution. We find that this feature in the transaction was entirely the result of a theory entertained by the young nobleman, regarding the best way of conducting a dangerous enterprise. William Rhind, his tutor, gave evidence afterwards, that, having several times conversed with the Earl on this subject in their walks, his lordship always professed, for his opinion, that ‘ he was not a wise man, that, having intended the execution of a high and dangerous purpose, communicates the same to any second person—because, keeping it to himself, he could never be discovered or disappointed.’ That he should have attempted to seize the King, without any other assistance than that of his brother, and without having made any arrangements for the subsequent management of his prisoner, is only to be accounted for by allowing a great deal for the miscalculations of an extravagant mind, which was further deranged by assurances of supernatural assistance.

His associate, Logan, was a gentleman of ancient family and considerable landed property, the uterine brother of Lord Home. His chief estate was that of Restalrig near Edinburgh; but the family had recently become possessed, by marriage, of another on the coast of Berwickshire, which formerly belonged to a branch of the Homes. In the fortalice belonging to that newly acquired property, * perched on a lofty precipice, from the bottom of which the tide of the German ocean never recedes, Logan lived in baronial state, occasionally giving protection, in his unapproachable eyry, to

* Fastcastle, or Falsecastle, now a ruin—the Wolf’s Crag, of the Author of Waverley.

such outlaws as Bothwell, despite of all the threats of King and council. In addition to dissolute character, irreligion, and other matters which are apt to dispose men to engage in hazardous enterprises, this baron seems to have had some personal grudge at the King, some unstaunched Scottish feud, which made him readily enter into Gowry's views. We learn this from some letters of his which have been preserved, in which he speaks of his prospects of revenge with the complacent feeling of one who expects presently to have a feast upon that terrible dainty. It is strange that, although four of these letters are addressed either to the Earl of Gowry, or to some *fourth* conspirator whose name is not known, very little is to be learned from them. Allusion is repeatedly made to a story of a gentleman of Padua, which Mr Alexander Ruthven had told him, and which he says is *a propos* to the design in hand—probably some dark tale of Italian vengeance. He talks with lively and self-gratulatory feeling of a dinner which he proposed to give to the person addressed, next year, in case of their enterprise being successful. He speaks with keen anxiety of a promise made by Gowry to give him, in the event of success, a present of the estate of Dirleton in East Lothian, (then his lordship's property;) from which it would appear, that he was in a great measure only an agent in the enterprise. To assure the person addressed of his resolution to go through with the plot, he describes his desire of revenge as so keen, that he would not be deterred from gratifying it although the scaffold were set up. But, further than these dark hints, the ultimate and chief object of the conspiracy—if it really had any such—receives very little illustration from these letters.

A little light, perhaps, is to be drawn from the conduct of the Earl during the brief interval which elapsed between the period of his arrival in the country and the denouement of the conspiracy. His deportment, in his occasional visits to court, was that of a man wrapt up in his own haughty thoughts, and who disregards all minor concerns in his anxiety respecting some important end. One day, in June, as he was entering what was called the *long gallery* of Holyroodhouse, for the purpose of visiting the King in his chamber of presence, which was situated at the extremity of that apartment, he perceived Colonel William Stewart, of the royal guards, enter it from the other end, having just left the King. As this officer had been active in seizing his father, he, from a natural repugnance, wished to avoid encountering him ; and he therefore stepped aside, in order to permit Stewart to have free way along the gallery. A servant, however, taking a different view of the case, called out, "What, my lord ! will you give back for any man here ? Come forward, I pray you, boldly." Gowry then thought proper to resume his walk along the centre of the room ; which being observed by Stewart, and construed into an insult, he stepped back into the King's chamber, and entered a violent complaint against the Earl. "Sir, will it please you," said he, "to listen to this strange matter ? Here comes me in the Earl of Gowry, to boast and threaten all who have done service to your Highness. He proposes, I see, to begin with me. But, beware the best of you all !" The Earl entering the apartment at this moment, Stewart withdrew without saying any more. To the surprise of all present, Gowry paid no attention to the man or his complaints, but

conversed with the King about indifferent matters. Being afterwards asked the cause of this, he answered by quoting the significant proverb, "The Eagle catches no flies;" from which we are to argue, that his mind contemplated higher objects of revenge. It is surely justifiable, also, from Stewart's readiness in taking offence, and from his emphatic warning to the court, to suppose that he had good reason to suspect an explosion of wrath on the part of Gowry, against all who had been concerned in his father's death, the King himself not excepted.

In other respects, Gowry's conduct was such as to make a favourable impression on all around him. At Perth, where he was provost, or chief magistrate, and where he generally resided, the people regarded him with the greatest affection and respect. It is commonly affirmed, also, that he endeavoured, by sanctimoniousness of deportment, to gain the esteem of the clergy, a mode of attaining to public honours which has always been found both easy and successful in Scotland, and which might have been suggested to Gowry, if there had been no other example, by the history of the Regent Moray, for whom it gained everything but the crown. It also appears, from the evidence given by his intimates after the conspiracy, that he continued, during this interval, to study the occult science which he had learned at Padua, and was careful always to have about his person, a scroll of magical characters, which he believed to be possessed of some high influence over his fate.

It was on Monday, the 4th of August, that he made his first known movement towards the performance of the plot. After supper that evening, being in company only with his brother and An-

drew Henderson, his chamberlain, he asked this official what he intended to do next day. Henderson, who seems to have been a simple-hearted man, answered, that he thought of riding to his lordship's estate of Ruthven, some miles off, in order to confer upon some matters of business with the tenants. The Earl said, "Stay that journey; you must ride to-morrow to Falkland, with my brother and Andrew Ruthven: see that you be ready at four in the morning; and, if my brother directs you back to me, with a message, or letter, make all the haste you can." Accordingly, Mr Alexander left Perth next morning early, accompanied by Henderson and Andrew Ruthven, and made the best of his way to Falkland, where he arrived a little after six o'clock, the distance being about a two hours ride.

King James was at this time residing at his favourite palace of Falkland, * for the sport of buck-hunting, of which he was very fond; and, as the morning of the 5th of August happened to be seasonable for this recreation, he had already breakfasted, and was on the point of mounting his horse. Young Ruthven sent out Andrew Henderson from his lodging, to ascertain the King's motions, and soon after learned, that his Majesty was walking through the Palace Square, in his boots, towards the stables, which stood, as their ruins still stand, at the distance of three or four hundred yards from the house. Having made up to the King

* In consideration of this place having been James's favourite Scottish residence, a view of it has been selected to adorn the front of the present volume. We are indebted for the design, to Mr Brown's beautiful and interesting publication of the Royal Palaces of Scotland.

at that place, Ruthven bowed to the extraordinary depth of his Majesty's knee, and addressed him with a countenance which bore unusual marks of reverence. Then drawing him a little aside, he began, with eyes bent upon the earth, to relate an adventure of a singular kind, which he said had befallen him on the preceding night. In taking a walk through the fields near Perth, he had encountered a man of mean appearance, whose person was unknown to him, and who wore a cloak wrapt carefully over the lower part of his face, as if for the purpose of concealment. His curiosity being excited regarding this person, he asked his name, and how he came to be wandering in so solitary a place; when the stranger, by faltering in his speech, and other marks of confusion, excited such suspicions in his mind, that he thought it necessary to examine him farther. Observing that he appeared to carry something under his cloak, he cast by the laps of that garment, and discovered a large pot full of broad gold pieces, which the man bore with difficulty under his arm. He immediately judged it necessary to take the fellow into custody, till he should give an explanation of his business. He brought him to a private place in his brother's mansion, locked several doors upon him, and, believing it to be his duty to make the King his first confidant in the transaction, he had come thus early to Falkland to impart the secret, with which even his own brother was not as yet acquainted.

According to the King's own account of this conference—the only one extant—his first answer, after thanking the Master of Gowry for his goodwill, was, that he could not properly interfere in

such a matter, as the treasure of no free subject could by law belong to him, except it were found under the earth. “Well,” said Ruthven, “the fellow confessed to me that he was going to hide it under ground ;—only, I had no leisure to inquire very particularly.” To this ingenious afterthought James replied, that an intention was very different from a deed, and that he could not yet see what right he had to meddle in such a matter. Ruthven, put out of his fence a second time, observed pettishly, that he thought his Majesty over scrupulous in a matter which promised so much profit to him ; and that, if he persisted in refusing, some others—as his brother, for instance—might meddle with it, and “make his Majesty the more ado.” James, then suspecting that the man was some practising Papist, who had come to Scotland with money to stir up a new Catholic rebellion, inquired if Ruthven could recollect the species of the coin, and what sort of a fellow he was that carried it. Here the conspirator’s ingenuity was again conspicuous. He answered, that the coin seemed foreign, and that, although the man appeared a native of Scotland, yet he could not recollect to have ever seen him before. James still hesitated : he would send a warrant, he said, to the magistrates of Perth, to receive the man from the Master’s hands, and subject him to a thorough examination. Ruthven, however, remonstrated vehemently against this proposal. If either his brother, he said, or the bailies got their fingers on the gold, his Majesty would get but a poor account of it ; it was only for the purpose of making the King the first meddler in this business, that he had taken all this trouble to apprise him of it.

And he eagerly requested that his Majesty would ride with him in a private manner to Perth, and take cognizance of the man and his precious load.

James was still irresolute. Surprised alike at the strangeness of the tale, and at the confused manner of the reciter, he could not decide what course he should pursue. He found his mind, perhaps, in that obnubilated state, which we generally experience when told any thing very much out of the common way, or of which we cannot well make the different facts tally. In such a mist, the mind becomes in a certain degree insensible to danger which it would otherwise suspect, because all those powers are engaged in unriddling the mystery which should properly be employed in the more important duty of circumspection.

Before the King could make any decision, his attendants had all got on horseback, the game was found, and the huntsmen were ready to do their duty; so he was obliged to break away from the Master, with a promise that he should give a resolute answer when the chase was concluded. Ruthven expressed great vexation at the delay, observing, that there was not such a hunting to be got every day as that which he had purposed to his Majesty.

The King had not been long on the fields, before the tale of the treasure came again into his mind, to the exclusion of all enjoyment of his favourite recreation. The curiosity which he had resisted before, now overpowered his better sense, and he formed the resolution to accompany young Ruthven to Perth. Sending a messenger to bring the Master, he informed him of this determination, and promised to carry it into effect so

soon as the chase should be ended. Ruthven then, as concerted the night before, desired Henderson to ride to Perth with all possible speed, and inform the Earl his brother that the King was to be with him incontinent, and that a dinner should be prepared. This, of course, he kept concealed from the King, being directly contrary to all that he had told his Majesty regarding the propriety of going alone, and without the Earl's knowledge. He followed James through all the windings of the chase which ensued, taking every opportunity he could get to urge him to quit the hunt, that he might ride to Perth.

About eleven o'clock, after a very hard chase of four hours, the buck was brought down about the distance of two arrow-flights from the royal stables, and the Master of Ruthven proceeded to entreat the King, in more earnest language than ever, to make haste with him towards Perth. It was James's usual practice to superintend the *curry* or dissection of the deer; but on the present occasion, he was prevailed on by Ruthven to remit that duty. Without even waiting for a fresh horse, or till his sword could be brought, or till the Duke of Lennox, the Earl of Mar, and other courtiers, could change their horses in order to attend him, he was induced, by the solicitations of this strange youth, to set off instantly on a long ride; only observing to his train, that he was going on a hurried visit to Perth, and should be back before the evening.

The first idea that occurred to the courtiers, when they saw the King go away in this abrupt manner, was, that he intended to institute proceedings against the Master of Oliphant, who had lately disturbed the public peace in the district of

Angus ; and they instantly exerted themselves to get fresh horses, that they might be enabled to accompany him. Some were so expeditious in this duty, as to overtake the King within the first few miles. Within one mile he was overtaken by a fresh horse, which his servants had sent after him. Being thus better mounted than Ruthven, whose horse was much jaded by the chase, he was easily able to outstrip him in speed ; yet, to his surprise, that young man continued as eager and importunate in his entreaties to him to make haste, as if he had been worse mounted, or disposed to ride at a slower pace. This circumstance, joined to the extraordinary deportment of the young man, his wild staring with his eyes, his occasional deep thoughtfulness, and the great anxiety he betrayed to prevent the courtiers from following, led the King to suspect that his wits were wandering. The first man who came up happened to be the Duke of Lennox, who was married to one of Ruthven's sisters. James, taking this nobleman aside, said to him, " You could not guess what errand I am riding for ! I am going to Perth to get a *pose* [a concealed treasure]. Mr Alexander Ruthven has informed me that he has found a man that has a pitcher full of coined gold of great sorts. " And he asked the Duke, " What humour he thought Mr Alexander to be of ? " Lennox answered, that he knew nothing else of him, " than that he was an honest discreet young man. " James then related to the Duke all the particulars of Ruthven's pretended adventure ; to which the Duke replied, " Sir, I like not that ; it is not likely. " Nevertheless, the King went on. When the party had come within a mile of Perth

Mr Alexander requested permission to ride on before, in order to make some preparations for his Majesty's arrival; to which his Majesty consented.

Henderson, who was dispatched to Perth at the beginning of the hunt, had arrived at ten o'clock, and immediately proceeded to deliver his message to the Earl of Gowry. At his entrance, Gowry was engaged in conversation with three gentlemen, who were paying him a morning visit; but he instantly withdrew to another room, and eagerly inquired if Henderson had brought a letter from his brother. "I have no letter," said Henderson. "What answer, then, have you brought?" "I was desired to inform your lordship," answered the chamberlain, "that the King's Majesty would be here incontinent, and that you must prepare his dinner." The Earl asked how the King seemed to have taken with his brother. "He was weel tane with," answered the messenger; "when he made his courtesy, the King laid his hand upon his shoulder." Henderson then retired to his own house, and changed his travelling for his customary dress; after which, returning to Gowry House, the Earl requested him to put on his *secret* [concealed defensive armour], and plate sleeves, as he "had a Highlandman to tak in the Shoegate," (the street in which the house was situated). The man did as he was bid, and afterwards assisted in taking up the Earl's dinner.

Gowry had that day excused himself from attending a meeting of the town-council, on the pretext of having business of his own; and, apparently, that he might the better appear the surprised host which the King was to expect him to be, he entertained at dinner three friends, different

from those formerly mentioned, who had happened to wait upon him. As he was sitting at table with these gentlemen, Andrew Ruthven, who had accompanied Mr Alexander and Andrew Henderson to Falkland, came in and whispered into his ear an announcement that the King was on the way. Soon after Mr Alexander himself came in, and proclaimed the fact of his Majesty's approach to the town; on which all rose from the table, and the Earl hastily prepared to go out to meet the King. The meeting took place on the South Inch, a common immediately without the town walls. The King, with his retinue of about fourteen persons, was then brought into Gowry House, attended by the Earl, and nearly a hundred of his friends and fellow-townsmen, who had turned out to welcome his Majesty.

The house into which James was thus conducted, was a huge edifice, which cannot be described better, without the assistance of a sister art, than by stating that it was in the shape of the letter L, having its shorter division parallel with the river Tay, and a garden extending behind the longer division, while a square, or, as it was then called, *a close*, was formed in front by a wall starting from the various extreme corners of the building, and meeting in an angle, where there was a gate. It was a house of three *flats* or storeys, the lower being occupied by cellars and menial apartments, the second by a dining-room and hall, and the third chiefly by a long picture-gallery. The principal access to the various stories was by a spiral stair, called in Scotland a *turnpike*, which was situated in the angle of the building. But there was another and smaller stair,

noted in the subsequent narrative as the *Black Turnpike*, which ascended near the upper extremity of the longer stroke of the L, giving admission to a chamber on the third floor, at the end of the picture-gallery. It is necessary that the reader should make himself acquainted with these minutiae, in order to understand what follows.

The Earl's reception of James was precisely such as he might have expected from a person whose house is honoured with the unexpected arrival of a too numerous and too dignified company of guests. His Lordship was polite, but confused; greatly anxious, it appeared, to do the necessary honours to his sovereign, yet embarrassed to the last degree regarding his proper entertainment. He was even worse provided than usual. His principal household servant was sick. The viands prepared for his own dinner and that of his friends, were half eaten, and entirely out of season. The King, though very hungry from the effects of six hours hard riding, was obliged to wait a whole hour before any food could be set before him. During the interval, his Majesty took an opportunity of asking the Master in a whisper, if they might not now go to examine the man and his pot of gold. But Alexander told him that it would be better to wait till after dinner; and in the meantime, he entreated the King not to seem too familiar with him, lest it should appear strange to the Earl. James then addressed himself to Gowry, for the purpose of whiling away the time; but he was surprised to find that there was no possibility of engaging that person in any thing like conversation, his whole discourse consisting of 'half words and imperfect sentences.'

‘ His Majesty being set down to his dinner, the Earl stood very pensive, and with a dejected countenance, at th’ end of his Majesties table, oft rounding (*whispering*) over his shoulder, one while to one of his servants, and another while to another ; and oft times went out and in to the chamber.’ * When the King had almost dined, his host conducted the courtiers into the adjoining hall, and saw them set down to meat ; but, instead of taking his own proper place at the board, he immediately returned, and resumed his silent and stupified attitude at the bottom of the King’s table. Just as James concluded his dinner, Mr Alexander whispered into his ear, that, as the courtiers were now all engaged, the present would be an excellent opportunity for stepping away by themselves to see the treasure, if his Majesty could only shake off the Earl. At Ruthven’s suggestion, James rose from table, and, addressing Gowry in a homely mannner, desired him to carry his cup into the hall, and act as his proxy, in drinking the healths of the guests. Alexander Ruthven then led the King forth from the chamber into the hall, where the royal attendants were taking their dinner ; crossed that room obliquely, towards the door by which it was entered from the main staircase ; ascended that staircase to the next floor above ; and entered the picture-gallery. While James advanced up the stair, Ruthven looked back into the hall, and intimated, as his Majesty’s command, that none should follow. After entering the picture-gallery, Ruthven locked the door carefully, muttering half aloud, “ We’ll make very

* The King’s Narrative, apud Pitcairn’s Trials.

sure of him," by way of excuse for a precaution which might have otherwise raised suspicions in the royal mind. He was now remarked by the King to assume a smiling and pleased look, which he had not exhibited at any former period of the day. It should be specified, that the conspirator had a sword by his side, while James had nothing but a hunting-horn, which, in the hurry of that busy morning, he had never found an opportunity of laying aside.

At the end of the picture-gallery was a square chamber, already mentioned as having a separate communication with the court-yard, or *close*, by means of the *Black Turnpike*. Into this chamber Ruthven now led the King, locking the door behind him, as he had done that of the gallery, and muttering the same excuse. In the corner of the room, was a door opening into a small chamber, or study, which was contained in a turret projecting from the main building. Ruthven ushered the King through the chamber into the study, the door of which he immediately locked, as he had done all the rest.

Here the King observed, instead of the bound treasure-keeper he had been led to expect, a man not only free, but having both defensive and offensive arms, being no other than Andrew Henderson the chamberlain, who, but half an hour before, had been thrust into this room by Alexander Ruthven, and the door locked upon him, without any intimation made as to the purpose for which he was to keep that strange post. The Master now suddenly changed his smiling demeanour for a ferocious frown; clapped his hat upon his head, as if to signify that all respect for the royal per-

son was at an end ; and presenting a dagger, which he snatched from Henderson's girdle, at the King's breast, exclaimed, " Sir, you must be my prisoner ; remember of my father's death ? " James was, of course, greatly alarmed at this violence. Yet, though it is generally supposed that the sight of a drawn weapon was sufficient to deprive him of his senses, he by no means lost his presence of mind. He was beginning to utter some remonstrance against Ruthven's conduct, when that youth fiercely exclaimed, " Hold your tongue, sir, or, by Christ, you shall die ! " There is some discrepancy in the evidence regarding Mr Alexander's behaviour at this point of the story. Henderson at first represented him as having appeared so determined to kill the King, that, if he had been permitted to hold the dagger as much longer as a man might walk but six steps, he would, for certain, have struck his Majesty to the hilts with it. The same witness afterwards gave a softer account of his appearance ; and, in all probability, as the King's imprisonment and not his death, seems to have been the first object of the conspirators, if not the whole extent of their intentions, the second account was the more correct of the two. Be that as it may, Henderson completely disappointed the expectations of his masters ; for, instead of assisting Ruthven in his task of intimidating and binding the King, as nine Scottish servants out of ten would have done in that age, he wrested the weapon out of the hand which pointed it to the King's breast, and vehemently entreated young Ruthven to desist from so cruel and so dangerous an enterprise. The King, then relieved from the fear of instant assassination, proceed-

ed to expostulate with the conspirator. "Maister Alexander," said he, in his usual broad Scotch, "you and I were always very great (*friendly*); touching your father's death, man, I was but ane minor at the time it happened; my council might then have done ony thing they pleased. Further, man, albeit ye deprive me of my life, ye will never be King of Scotland; for I have baith sons and dochters. And there are men in this town, and other friends, who will not leave it unrevenged." Ruthven, somewhat mollified, swore a great oath that it was not his Majesty's life that he craved. "What reck, then," said the King, "although ye tak off your hat?" Ruthven uncovered himself, and his Majesty proceeded to say, "What is it ye crave, man, an ye crave not my life?" Ruthven replied, "Sir, it is but ane promise." "What promise?" inquired James. "Sir," said Ruthven, "my brother the Earl will tell you." The King desiring him to bring that person, Mr Alexander exacted a promise from his Majesty, upon oath, that he should not open the windows or cry out, while he was absent, and then left the room, locking the door behind him. Immediately after he was gone, James entered into conversation with Henderson, who all this time had exemplified, by his conduct, how unfit he was for the part which the brothers had designed him to act. "How cam ye in here, man?" said the King. "As God leives," answered the unfortunate chamberlain, "I was shot in like ane dog." "Do you think my lord of Gowry will do me any evil, man?" inquired the King. The man answered, "I vow to God, sir, I shall die first." James, then revolving his situation, conceived that, although he had promised not

to open any window himself, he might command this wretched minion to do so for him. On being requested to perform this service, Henderson opened one of the two small windows by which the turret was lighted—not that which looked towards the court-yard, whence assistance was to be expected, but the opposite casement, which had its aspect towards the public street. “Fy,” cried the King, “the wrong window, man!” Henderson, instantly perceiving his mistake, crossed towards the opposite window; but, before he reached it, Alexander Ruthven again burst into the apartment, exclaiming, “By God, Sir, there is nae remeid!” after which he sprung at the King, seized his hands, and began to bind them with a garter, which he had brought with him.

In the mean time, the elder brother was playing his own part in the conspiracy. After the King and Alexander had passed through the dining-hall, his lordship asked the guests to step with him into the garden, and take an additional dessert from his cherry-trees. Opening a side-door in the hall, he led the way, by an outer stair, into the garden behind the house. They had not been long there, however, when one of the domestics came to them hastily, and informed his master, that the King had just ridden away to Falkland, and was already through the South Inch. The courtiers, accustomed to such practical jokes on the part of his Majesty, betrayed no surprise at the information, but rushed through the house into the exterior court-yard, crying for their horses, and expressing the greatest anxiety to be gone. Among all of them, none cried with more vehemence or vociferation than the Earl of Gowry, who no doubt

wished to increase the impatience of his guests to quit the house. A servant informing him that his horse was at Scone, and of course beyond reach, he affected not to hear, and still continued his cry of "Horse! Horse!" At length, on coming to the outer gate, the Duke of Lennox asked the porter, if his Majesty had gone forth. The man answering in the negative, Gowry sternly told him he lied, and proposed to go back to the house to ascertain the fact. He ran up the principal staircase, as if for that purpose, but in reality, it is supposed, to hold a conference with his brother, for that person's retirement from the turret corresponded in point of time with the Earl's going up into the house. Soon returning to the court-yard, he informed the courtiers that the King had really left the house, having gone by the back-gate. "That cannot be, my lord," said the pertinacious porter, "for I have the key of the back-gate, and of all the gates of the place." Puzzled by this contradictory intelligence, the King's attendants rushed out to the street, and went hither and thither in all directions to acquire information. At that moment, a cry was heard—a cry so shrill and piercing, and so completely betokening the extremity of mortal fear, that the hearers many days afterwards declared, that they should never forget it. The Duke of Lennox said to the Earl of Mar, "That is the King's voice, be he where he will himself!" Presently after, as they gazed inquiringly up to the walls of the building whence the sound seemed to have proceeded, they saw the King's elbow and head partially projected from the window of the little turret which overhung the street, the head uncovered, the cheeks red, and a

hand grasping the mouth, as if to prevent utterance, while the voice exclaimed, with difficult articulation, but the same tone of extreme distress and terror, "I am murdered! Treason, treason! My Lord of Mar, help!" But it is here necessary to revert to the proceedings of Alexander Ruthven, in the turret.

When that person entered the turret the second time, and made an attempt to bind his victim, James appears to have understood, from his actions and language, that there was nothing to be expected but instant death. Under such distressing circumstances, it might have been expected that his Majesty, who neither possessed much courage, nor much strength, would have at once sunk under the efforts of the supposed assassin. On the contrary, he acquired at once magnanimity and physical force from the emergency. Exclaiming that he was born a free King, and would die a free King, he wrenched his hands loose from the gripe of the conspirator, and sprung once more free upon the floor. Henderson, at the same time, snatched away the garter. Ruthven lost no time in again springing upon the King. Seizing his Majesty by the throat with one hand, he thrust the other into his mouth, to prevent him from crying. In the violence of this action, he pressed James's shoulders against the wall, close by the half opened window. While they were in that attitude, Henderson put his hand over the King's left shoulder, and drew up the moveable wooden board, which, according to an almost universal practice in Scotland during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, constituted the lower part of the casement. James then shifted his position in such a

way, as to cause his face to be visible through the opening to a group of his attendants on the public street below, among whom he recognised his school-fellow and friend the Earl of Mar. At that moment, Henderson drawing Ruthven's hand off the King's mouth, he was enabled to utter those cries for succour which have just been particularized.

Lennox and Mar, who first observed the King's face at the window, had but little time to speculate upon his extraordinary circumstances; for, as appeared to them, he was almost immediately dragged back into the chamber by the person with whom he seemed to be struggling. The two noblemen instantly rushed in at the gate, crossed the court-yard diagonally towards the main staircase, ascended that stair till they reached the floor in which they observed the King, and, entering the gallery, which was now open, * endeavoured to force open the door of the chamber at its upper extremity, which, however, resisted all their efforts, although they used a ladder, which they found in the room, as a battering-ram against it. Fortunately, while they were thus put *hors-de-combat*, some other friends of the King took a different and patent way towards the scene of strife. The first man to reach that scene was a page of the name of John Ramsay, an undistinguished youth of three-and-twenty, who, on rising from

* The circumstance of the gallery-door, which was locked by Alexander Ruthven, being open, when Lennox and Mar went up to the King's rescue, seems to prove, that the Master came out to the staircase, or else admitted his brother into the gallery, for the purpose of having a conference with him, during the time of his absence from the turret.

his dinner in the hall, had been intrusted by a servant with the keeping of a hawk, which had that day been presented to the King, and who, at this moment, carried the bird fastened upon his left hand. Ramsay had the good fortune, in his attempt to reach the King, to select the Black Turnpike as what appeared the nearest way. It is said that that access was usually shut up as obsolete, but was, on the present occasion, open, apparently for the use of the conspirators.

After James had uttered his cry for help at the window, his struggles with Ruthven assumed a much more desperate character. The Master, then casting a reproachful look at the domestic whom he had expected to assist him, said, "Woe worth thee! Thou wilt cause us all die!" Trembling with excessive rage, he put his right hand upon his sword, designing, as we are to suppose, to draw it, and dispatch the King. But James, whose strength rose with his danger, as that of Ruthven declined with his agitation, put his hand so firmly upon the hilt of the weapon, that the young man was unable to unsheath it. At this moment, Henderson went into the chamber, and, finding the key in the door which opened upon the Black Turnpike, turned it about, and opened the door, for the double purpose, according to his declaration, of making his own escape, and letting in the King's servants. The struggles of Ruthven and the King, meanwhile, increased in violence. Clashed in each other's arms, each striving alike between life and death, they tottered forth from the closet into the chamber, whither Henderson had gone before them. After wrestling a little there, James was fortunately enabled, by the

strength which despair had lent him, to force down his antagonist upon his knees, and to catch his head under his arm. They were in that situation—Ruthven's head pressed under his Majesty's left armpit, and his hand thrust upwards against the King's face—when John Ramsay, who, as already mentioned, endeavoured to seek the King by ascending the Black Turnpike, pushed up the door, and entered the apartment.

James was at first unable, either from breathlessness or the pressure of Ruthven's hand, to give his page any directions. The young man, however, could easily perceive that his proper duty was to release the King, by whatever means, from the hands of the Master of Gowry. Stopping but a moment to cast the hawk from his hand, he drew the whinyard, or short sword, which he wore as part of his hunting-dress, and, making a half circuit round the parties, attempted, with proper respect for the royal person, to inflict a stab on Ruthven. James at that moment mumbled forth, "Strike him low—he has on a doublet of proof;" a fact which he had ascertained in the struggle. But Ramsay appears to have only succeeded in wounding the conspirator on the face and neck. He did enough, however, to cause the Master to relax the hold he had upon the King, who was now able to thrust him out of the apartment, and down the stair.

The rescue so far effected, Ramsay went to a window, or slip in the staircase, and, seeing Sir Thomas Erskine in the court-yard, cried to him, "Fy, Sir Thomas, come up this turn-pike—up to the head of it." The person so called upon entered the staircase accordingly, followed by Hugh

Herries, the King's physician, and George Wilson, a servant. As he was ascending, he met Alexander Ruthven, who was staggering downwards with a bloody face and neck. Instantly apprehending that this was the traitor, he called upon his followers to strike him, having himself no weapon; and Hugh Herries accordingly gave the wounded man a mortal blow, which caused him to fall at the bottom of the stair, where he almost instantly expired. As he turned in the death-agony, he muttered, "Alas! I had not the wyte * of it;" an expression which was afterwards harped upon by those who disbelieved in the reality of this conspiracy, as evidence against the King, but which certainly denotes no more than that the young man was led into the plot by the influence of his elder brother's more powerful and ambitious mind.

The King was not yet by any means fully rescued. When the Earl of Gowry heard the King's voice proceeding from the window, he affected to be in great surprise at the effect which it had upon Lennox, Mar, and others, and repeatedly asked them what they meant, as if he himself had not heard the sounds which occasioned their wonder. Sir Thomas Erskine, however, penetrated his thoughts, and, seizing him by the collar, exclaimed, "Traitor, this is thy deed!" Gowry asseverated that he knew not of the matter; but Erskine disregarded his words, and dashed him to the earth, where, if we may believe his own declaration, he would have stabbed him, if he had happened to have his dagger about him. The Earl's

* Blame.

servants soon released their master from the gripe of Sir Thomas, who then made haste, as already mentioned, to ascend the turnpike to the King. It was this rencounter with Gowry which prevented him from rushing at the very first, with Lennox and Mar, up the main staircase ; which if he had done, be it remarked, Alexander Ruthven would not have been killed in the way described, nor would the King have had the valuable assistance of Erskine and Herries, in protecting him from a danger, the greatest which had as yet befallen him.

Gowry, on arising from the ground where Erskine had laid him, drew two swords which he wore in one scabbard, and, with one in each hand, after the Italian fashion, rushed through the crowd, exclaiming, that “ he would either be in his own house, or die by the way ! ” Some person unknown put a steel bonnet on his head, as he was entering the court-yard. Thus armed and defended, he crossed the court, towards the door of the Black Turnpike, preceded and followed by about seven of his principal retainers. Thomas Cranstoun, who went before him, pointed out the corpse of Alexander Ruthven, which was lying with the face downwards at the bottom of the stair. But Gowry was too intent upon active exertion, to linger a moment even over the body of a slain brother. “ Up the stair ! ” was the brief but significant answer he gave to Cranstoun’s remark. The domestic accordingly proceeded ; and the Earl went after, with the rest of his servants, exclaiming, all the way, that he would put his weapons through the first man he met.

The King, whose friends were only four in num-

ber—for Henderson had slipped away immediately after Ruthven was dispatched—was greatly alarmed when he perceived this large party of enemies about to enter the room. His courage, however, such as it was, did not forsake him. Believing that Alexander Ruthven had dropped his sword amongst the rushes which were strewed over the apartment, he commenced a search for it, intending to use it against the Earl and his servants, as he had no weapon of his own. By a more fortunate resolution, his friends thought it would be best for both himself and them, as well as for the country, that he should retire from the scene of strife; and they accordingly thrust him hastily into the round closet within the turret. Just as they did so, Gowry entered with his retinue, and began to fight.

This battle was unequal, to the extent of two to one; and what gave the assailants still greater advantage, Gowry was a most dexterous adept in the use of the double sword; while Herries, one of the King's party, was embarrassed in his evolutions by a club-foot. It was with the greatest difficulty, at first, that the weaker party could defend themselves. Fortunately, however, Gowry's servants, though disposed to fight for their master as a matter of course, were awed and dashed considerably by the reflection that, in the present case, they might commit high treason as well as manslaughter; and accordingly, they did not *buckle* (to use the favourite phrase of the time) with that energy which was displayed by the opposite and more desperate party. For some time, wounds were given and taken on both sides. At length, Ramsay used an expression which did more for

him than ten swords could have done. "What matters it," said he, "to fight *now*, since our dear master is slaughtered!" At this, the Earl of Gowry dropped the points of his swords upon the floor, confounded, as it would appear, at the idea of such a catastrophe, where he had contemplated something so much more innocent. Ramsay took that opportunity to run him through the body; and the unfortunate nobleman dropped on the floor without saying a single word. His servants then fled down the turnpike, leaving the King's friends in possession of the bloody chamber.

During all the time of this fray, the Duke of Lennox and the Earl of Mar had been beating violently at the door which communicated betwixt the gallery and the chamber; giving thereby an additional shade of horror to the scene, as at first the royal party supposed them to be another company of Gowry's servants, bent on rescuing their master, or engaged on some other division of the conspiracy. It being now ascertained who they were, means were taken to open the door, and admit the two noblemen, who, as might be expected, expressed no small surprise at finding the Earl of Gowry, whom they had just parted with on the street, lying dead at his Majesty's feet. James, now assured that the worst of the danger was over, piously knelt down upon the floor, and, with all his friends in the same attitude around him, returned fervent thanks, "out of his own mouth, for that miraculous deliverance and victory; assuring himself," as he tells us in his narrative of the affair, "that God had preserved him from so desperate a perill, for the perfiting of some greater work behind, to his glorie, and for procur-

ing by him the wief of his people, that God had committed to his charge." Either before or after this devout action, seeing his hawk flutter wildly through the apartment, he set his foot upon her leash, and caused her to be taken in charge by her former keeper.

Another danger yet remained. The people of Perth, on hearing of the fray at Gowry House, had assembled at the sound of an alarm-bell, and, being prepossessed in the highest degree in favour of their youthful provost, they could not at first believe that he was the aggressor or conspirator, but were convinced that, on the contrary, the whole affair was a plot against him and his brother, on the part of the King and courtiers. When it is recollected that Gowry's servants were equally ignorant of the real nature of the conspiracy, and that they were even more zealously disposed than the citizens to revenge their master's death, it must be evident that James, with little more than a dozen servants in the town, and only the half of these in immediate attendance, was still in very perilous circumstances. From the windows of the little turret, he could at this moment hear the most dreadful threats directed against himself by the people below. Some were crying, "Woe befall the bloody butchers, that have murdered these innocents!" Others, addressing their fellow-townsmen, cried, "Ye are not gude neighbours that help not your provost!" One woman openly threatened, that the green coats of the King and his courtiers should yet make atonement for this butchery; and a gentleman of Gowry's name and family was heard to cry for a beam to break open the door of the vaults, and gunpowder to blow up

the house. A great number of Gowry's servants, mingled with the citizens, rushed up the Black Turnpike; and, if the royal party had not taken the precaution to shut and lock the door, would have burst into the room, and probably put an end to the King's life. As it was, they testified their hostile intentions by thrusting pikes and swords through the small square aperture, which, according to an old custom in Scotland, still common in the dwellings of the common people, was left in the lower corner of the door. By one of these weapons a gentleman was wounded in the leg.

Fortunately, the magistrates of the town took a different view of the causes of this tumult from what the mob were now acting upon. Partly from the feeling of their office, which naturally led them to side with dignitaries, and partly, perhaps, from their habit of quelling all mobs, however originated, these gentlemen conceived it their duty to exert themselves in pacifying, rather than inflaming the passions which possessed the multitude. Having succeeded so far in doing so, they approached the house, and signified a wish to see the King, and hear his own account of the matter. James then appeared at a window, and gave them a short explanation of what had taken place, and of his present circumstances. The crowd was then withdrawn from the Black Turnpike, and a meeting effected between the municipal authorities and their imprisoned sovereign.

It is one of the most curious subordinate facts connected with the Gowry conspiracy, that the news of this popular tumult travelled in an amazingly brief space of time to Dundee, a town upwards of twenty English miles distant; the inha-

bitants of which, guessing that Perth would be given up to pillage for the treasonous conduct of its citizens, came up in a body, before the evening was far spent, bearing arms in their hands, wherewith to fit themselves for the duty of spoliation. It was in consequence of an ancient dispute between the two towns for burgal precedency, which had lately been conducted with an unexampled degree of asperity, that the people of Dundee were moved to take this precipitate step. We may therefore suppose that, when they arrived at Perth, and found every thing quiet, the triumph of the inhabitants of that town would be as great in ridicule, as that of the inhabitants of Dundee was expected to be in a somewhat more substantial sort of harvest.

Assured of the protection of the magistrates, James now descended to the lower and better apartments of the house. But before doing so, he committed the bodies of the two slain brothers to the hands of these dignitaries, to be kept till they should be examined by the law authorities, and treated in the manner usual in cases of high treason. It was then remarked, with the superstition of that age, that, on Gowry's girdle being removed (in which part of his dress he had concealed the magical scroll already mentioned), the blood for the first time began to flow from his wound. Of course, the true cause of that apparent phenomenon, was the motion of the body occasioned in removing the girdle.

James left the town at eight o'clock, thinking it better to brave the terrors of a somewhat stormy night, than to remain longer amidst a people from whose excited passions he had such inade-

quate means of defending himself. As he rode towards Falkland, he found, notwithstanding the darkness and the storm, the road every where crowded with the inhabitants of the adjacent districts, who had already heard obscure reports of his danger, and now flocked to ascertain that he was safe. The congratulations which these people poured upon him, the very circumstance of their assembling in such a way, prove that, by the nation at large, exclusive of some of the clergy, he was regarded with feelings of warm affection. After a singularly busy and eventful day, he returned, late in the evening, to the bosom of his family at Falkland, from which he had set out that morning with so little expectation of extraordinary adventures. Happily, the transactions of the day brought no mischief to his consort, who, at this time, was six months pregnant with the child, afterwards Charles I.

He next morning conceived it to be necessary to acquaint the inhabitants of Edinburgh with the event, through the medium of his Privy Council. At first, when little was known besides that the King had been delivered from an imminent danger, the news was received with expressions of satisfaction such as could not but be agreeable to the King. Elsewhere, the popular feeling was precisely the same: at Aberdeen, the magistrates went through the streets *singing psalms of rejoicing*. But, when the particulars of the strange tale reached the public ear, doubts and suspicions began to take place of these expressions of loyalty. The whole affair was so strange and improbable—the story told by Alexander Ruthven to the King—the non-appearance of any associates in the con-

spiracy—the behaviour of the servant in the turret—and, though last not least, the energy with which the King represented himself to have acted—that it was difficult to reconcile it with the ordinary course of worldly events; and the public mind rather inclined to believe, what was certainly as likely in the abstract, that it was a conspiracy of the court against the two brothers.

James soon learned that suspicions to this effect were afloat; and, for the purpose of procuring evidence in his own exculpation, he advertised a reward to the man of the turret, who had never since been seen, provided he would give himself up, and submit to an examination. Henderson did so; and from his evidence, along with that of other persons concerned, a narrative was drawn up by the King, and published. This narrative, however, as it was written by James in the simple honesty of his heart, with the full impression of his fears warm upon it, and therefore, perhaps, a little exaggerated, served little to correct the evil. He had previously taken the extraordinary step of appearing in state upon the city market-cross, and personally attesting with his own mouth, every word of a discourse which his chaplain Galloway delivered on the subject to the assembled crowd. Remembering also the immense influence of the ministers over the public, he requested them to touch upon this subject in their sermons, according to a formula which he prescribed, taking an opportunity at the same time to incline the hearts of their congregations to thank heaven for its miraculous interposition in his favour. It is always, however, an unhappy thing for a man of rank to be thrown upon the mercy of an inferior. The preachers,

who had many causes of offence against the King, could not resist the present opportunity of annoying him. Under the pretext of the obscurity and contradictions of the received account of the conspiracy, and declaring that their consciences would not permit them to mingle *what might be false* with the edicts of truth, they refused to do any more than thank heaven in general terms for the preservation of the King's life. James, who observed with pain the bad example they were thus setting to his subjects, and who could not but remember how unscrupulously they had often assailed his own character and measures from the pulpit on the vaguest surmises, thought it allowable to take sharp measures with the recusants, and finally forced all except one to obey his behest, and even to preach the truth of the conspiracy at various places throughout the kingdom, besides their own proper churches. Such a proceeding may now be deemed odd, and even tyrannical on James's part; but the fashion of handling secular matters in the pulpit was introduced by the preachers themselves, and was quite a fashionable custom at the time. The solitary sceptic thus left, was the famed Mr Robert Bruce. With him James condescended to have several personal interviews, in order to convince him of the reality of the attempt upon his life. Every act of deference, however, to a man of this order, as it exalted his opinion of himself, was only calculated to make him the more unflinching. When James found all his kindness misspent upon the 'proud puritan,' he deprived him of his benefice, and banished him from the kingdom. Strange to say, Bruce lived more than thirty years after in

exile on this account, rather than make the proper acknowledgements to the King, although long before the expiry of that period he had ceased to entertain any doubts of the conspiracy. Historians are usually loud in applauding this adherence to principle, as they call it: but surely Bruce should not have doubted the King, after he had condescended to make personal assurance of the fact; nor was it right to abandon a sacred charge, in which he was acknowledged to be eminently useful, for a matter so very insignificant, and so personal to himself. The proper feeling regarding this case should be one rather of pity than admiration—pity for talents, piety, and good intentions, all sacrificed to the meanest emotions of our nature, the pride of singularity in trifles, and the vulgar pleasure of triumphing over a superior when accident has put it into our power.

It is now doing nothing but justice to the King, which was not done to him in his own time, to say, that his situation on the 5th of August 1600, was really one of extraordinary peril, and that his conduct throughout the whole of the trying scene, seems, from all the known circumstances, to have been alike honourable to him as a king and as a man. From the issue of the conspiracy, so fatal to the conspirators, and to them only, we are apt to overlook his dangers altogether, and to say lightly that he was more frightened than hurt. But, though he happened to escape, we should recollect that, for several hours, his life was threatened by many varied dangers, which, but for his own discretion, and extraordinary good fortune, he could scarcely have evaded. In the first place, although Alexander Ruthven might only have de-

signed to seize his person, it is evident that he was soon induced, by fear of discovery, to resolve upon the last extremity of violence—to bind, and then to murder his victim. Let the reader only pause a little to consider the King's circumstances when that young man burst into the closet a second time, and made his declaration that "there was no remeid;" and he will scarcely fail to be struck by the peculiar horrors of the case. Let him conceive the desperate struggle which ensued—a struggle between a youth of full growth and strength, and a man whose constitution was originally the feeblest;—let him consider the remote and lock-fast place—the weakness of the royal retinue, compared with that of the Ruthvens—the utter isolation of the King, so to speak, amidst a wilderness of dangers; and he will find it difficult to withhold his sympathy from a fellow-creature under such an extraordinary trial. Be it recollected, that an unarmed man, exposed to one who is possessed of weapons, is apt to have very different feelings from one who is brought face to face in the usual way with a fair antagonist. No degree of what is called courage may avail in such a case. To part with life, moreover, in the heat of combat, is very different in anticipation from the idea of submitting in cold blood to the knife of the assassin. When all these things are considered, we are apt to allow not only the reality of the King's danger, which was so long denied by a party, but the great merit he had in preserving his presence of mind, and being able to exert himself for his own deliverance, under circumstances so apt to shake the nerves of even those who make heroism their boast and their profession.

A question may still arise in reference to the moving principle of this singular conspiracy. But, further than what is suggested at the beginning of the present chapter, it is impossible, while possessed of the present limited evidence, to penetrate into the mystery. The sum of the whole is, that it was the rash and ill-provided undertaking of two headstrong young men, in alliance with a more aged and vicious associate, having for its motives some vague desires of vengeance for real or fancied injuries, mingled strangely with some ambitious political views, which appear to have been still more indefinite. If there is an unusual mystery in the case, it is to be attributed solely to the singularly small number of the conspirators, their having withheld their secret both from writing and from the ears of friends, and the circumstance of their having died without examination. Should it still appear wonderful that the two brothers should have made such an attempt unassisted, let the cause of the wonder be sought in their peculiar character, as explained at the beginning of this chapter. It is surely much more likely, that two such adventurers as they, should form a wild and hopeless project for their own aggrandisement, than that the King, a man never characterized as sanguinary, and whose circumstances and prospects in life were the very best possible, should have thought of hazarding life, character, conscience, and all that he either possessed or expected, for the purpose of destroying two men against whom he had no imaginable cause of offence, and whose deaths, it cannot be made to appear, promised him the least advantage. Had there been no mystery in the Gowry Conspiracy, it

would have long ago been regarded as a simple and unimportant matter: had the brothers not been unfortunate, and the King unhurt, we believe that the guilt of the former would never have been doubted.

James's conduct in regard to those concerned or connected with the conspiracy, was such as might have been expected in that age from a monarch who had often been exposed to such attempts, and wished to prevent their recurrence. He caused three of Gowry's servants to be executed for drawing their swords against his attendants in the gallery-chamber, although it never could be made to appear that they foreknew the conspiracy, or acted from any other motives than the ordinary ideas of the time regarding the duty of a servant to a master. The estates and titles of the Earl he caused to be forfeited, all his near relations to be banished, his very name to be expunged from society; and the bodies of the two brothers, being dismembered, were dispersed for permanent exhibition on public places throughout the kingdom.* So completely successful was his attempt to depress the family, that no male descendant is now known to exist. But, with the unpleasing details of judicial vengeance, we should also relate, that, out of the rents of the forfeited estates, the King granted the large sum of a thousand merks yearly to the poor, as a mark of his gratitude to the Almighty for his deliverance.

It was not till eight years after, when James was removed to London, that Logan's share in

* Their heads remained on the western pinnacle of the Tolbooth of Edinburgh, till some time during the Civil War.

the conspiracy was discovered. Logan had employed a man of the name of Bour as his messenger in communicating with the two Ruthvens. Bour, being unable to read or write, although in every other respect well qualified for his duty, was obliged to call in the assistance of George Sprot, a notary at the sea-port of Eyemouth, that he might have the letters which Logan addressed to him read. Sprott, who thus became in some measure privy to the conspiracy, kept the secret till after the death of Logan and Bour, when he was so imprudent as to utter hints that he could make some discoveries regarding the mysterious enterprise of the fifth of August. The Privy Council immediately caused him to be apprehended, and, having examined him with the assistance of the torture, induced him to make a full confession of all he knew ; after which he was immediately hanged for misprision or concealment of treason. Five letters, written by Logan, were afterwards discovered among his papers, and served to throw the feeble though fortunate light upon the conspiracy, which has been already presented to the reader. These valuable documents, having been engrossed in the records of parliament, are yet preserved in the national Register House at Edinburgh. *

It was a fact noted by the annalists of the time, that the unfortunate Charles I. was born on the very day (November 19.) on which the dismem-

* Almost every known or attainable document regarding the Gowry Conspiracy has been engrossed at length in Mr Pitcairn's Criminal Trials; and the present account of the transaction is chiefly drawn up from that immense multitude of testimonies.

berment of the two brothers took place at the cross of Edinburgh. Before this period, James had become the father of a daughter named Elizabeth, distinguished in British history as the grandmother of King George I., and therefore as forming the channel by which the blood of the family of Hanover reached the throne. The King was heard to remark, on the birth of Charles, that the nineteenth day of the month seemed to be consecrated in some peculiar way to his use. He was himself born on the 19th of June; he first saw his wife on the 19th of May; his eldest son Henry was born on the 19th of February; his daughter Elizabeth on the 19th of August; and now his second son was ushered into the world on the 19th of November.

CHAPTER X.

INTRIGUES PREPARATORY OF THE SUCCESSION.—DEATH OF
ELIZABETH.

1601—1603.

THE Gowry Conspiracy may almost be considered the last event of King James's Scottish reign. The time betwixt that and his accession to the English throne—about two years and a half—was spent in a state of tranquillity, to which there was no other exception than the hopes and fears arising from the intrigues which he set on foot for securing the object of his wishes.

James's right is so clear, in a genealogical point of view, that he is generally ridiculed by modern historians for the extreme anxiety and tenderness which he displayed on that point. But he had, in reality, great reason for the fears which seem to have agitated him. Although the claim of the Infanta of Spain, founded upon a remote descent from the House of Plantagenet, was the most visionary imaginable; yet it was held up by a great portion of the Catholics, in whose eyes religion went far beyond hereditary right. The claims of the descendants of Mary, the youngest daughter of Henry VII., were nothing in heraldry against

those of the Scottish royal family, which traced its descent from Margaret, eldest daughter of the same monarch. But, as Henry VIII., by act of parliament, and by will, had excluded aliens from the throne, and as it was anticipated that a considerable part of the English nation entertained an actual antipathy to the King of Scots, the hereditary enemy of their country, there was considerable danger that the laws of primogeniture, although favoured by the very principles of nature, might in this case be little attended to. Above all, there was the great difficulty of Queen Elizabeth's good will and pleasure to be taken into account; it being treason, by an act of the 13th of her reign, to dispute, that the reigning sovereign could, with consent of parliament, alter and destine the succession as might seem most meet.

It was under the compulsion of these good reasons, and partly from the natural anxiety which must ever attend the expectation of a large inheritance, however certain its determination, that King James thought it necessary, before the period now under review, to send emissaries to all the principal courts of Europe, and even to some of the minor states of Germany, setting forth his claims, and representing his disposition to be on good terms with them, in the event of their favouring, or not obstructing, his succession. For the latter reason, he took every expedient for gratifying Queen Elizabeth, upon whom he hoped at last to work so far as to procure from her a declaration of his right to be her successor; by which all his cares would have been at an end.

In conducting his various negotiations, he was put to great difficulty by the different faiths of

those whose favour he had to seek, and the hostility which some of them bore to his great English patroness. He was troubled in a particular manner by the necessity under which he supposed himself to lie, of conciliating the King of Spain and the Pope, two personages who were at open war with Elizabeth, and were the most odious possible to the greater part of his subjects, present and future, as the arch-enemies of the Reformed religion. For attempting to procure the good will of these potentates, and of the Catholics in general, by holding out hopes of toleration to this party, which he certainly did not afterwards realize, James is generally blamed, and surely not without reason, as guilty of a certain degree of meanness and duplicity. Yet it must be allowed in his favour, that he showed, throughout his whole life, equal favour to the Papists and Protestants, so far as individuals were concerned, and might be really unable, after his accession, to perform the promises of general favour which he had held out. His correspondence with the Pope was disclosed to Elizabeth some years before her death; but, as the grand reason for the Protestantism of that princess was nothing but the non-acknowledgment of her title by the Pope, and as she lost all fear on that score in her elder years, she does not appear to have conceived great indignation against her Scottish cousin for his tampering with the Pontiff, to whose creed at least, it is commonly understood, she never had any violent objections.

James's hopes of the succession were agitated a good deal by the proceedings of the famous Earl of Essex, Elizabeth's last and best favourite. Essex, who always professed to be a friend to the King of

Scots, entered into a correspondence with his Majesty, in 1600, at the time when he lay under the displeasure of Elizabeth, for having left his army in Ireland, and for the innumerable instances of caprice, and insolence towards herself, which marked the end of his life. The object of Essex's whole thoughts appeared to be a triumph over the party of his enemy Robert Cecil, her Majesty's sagacious secretary of state ; and it was probably with a view, solely, of employing the King of Scots for this purpose, that he urged him in this correspondence to take up arms, and join him in an attempt to force Elizabeth to declare his Majesty her successor, promising, for the encouragement of the northern monarch, that Lord Mountjoy should bring over five thousand troops from Ireland, to further the same object. James was too cautious, and possessed of too little of the necessary means, to do what Essex prompted : the failure of such an enterprise must have been destruction to his hopes ; while its success might only promote the views which Essex himself was suspected to have upon the supreme government. He fortunately resolved upon the wiser course of waiting till Elizabeth, now in her sixty-eighth year, should die, and leave her seat vacant for him.

Essex, as is well known, made an irruption [February 8, 1601,] into the city, at the head of only two hundred of his friends and dependents, and, in imitation of the Earl of Bothwell, attempted to possess himself of the person of his sovereign, for the avowed purpose of deposing her ministers, who, he professed, were favourable to the claims of the Infanta, and adverse to those of the King of Scots. Being foiled in this most rash and ill-con-

certed enterprise, he was tried for high-treason, and found guilty. A man of more worldly wisdom could not have failed, by working upon the absurd passions of Elizabeth, to procure mercy; but inflamed by disappointed ambition, instead of taking any pains to soften her Majesty's displeasure, Essex uttered the unpardonable expression, that "her mind was as crooked as her body," which being immediately carried to her ears, threw her into an agony of rage. It is said that, even at the very last, if he had sued with proper humility for his life, it would have been spared. But, as no petition of that kind reached her, and as she was convinced that his death was indispensable to the security of her government, she at last gave reluctant consent to his execution, which took place on the 25th of February.

On hearing of the seizure of this Earl, James had hastened, with feelings of sincere friendship, to send two ambassadors to sue for his life, giving them instructions, in the event of entreaties being found unsuccessful, to try the effect of threats. The first of these ambassadors, John Earl of Mar, the King's friend and school-fellow, and who possessed diplomatic abilities of no mean compass, was prepared to perform his duty with all the earnestness which a warm personal friendship could inspire; and his co-adjutor, Edward Bruce, Abbot of Kinross, from attachment to his lordship, was inclined to be equally zealous. But they did not arrive till the 6th of March, ten days after Essex's execution; when they could only congratulate the Queen on her delivery from the conspiracy; which had been assigned as the ostensible object of their mission. James afterwards confessed, that the

death of this unfortunate nobleman, although it at first appeared the loss of a prime partisan, was eventually found to be advantageous to his interests.

On the 8th of April, James wrote, from the palace of Linlithgow, a long letter to his ambassadors in England, enjoining them to beg a promise from the Queen, that she should do nothing in her own time to prejudice his right of succession, 'nor no checce under cure reserved against me, excepted alwayis if she be not to endure as long as the sunne and moone.' It is curious, at the present time, to observe some of the instructions which the King gives them in this letter. 'First, you are to obtaine all the certainty you can of the toun of London, that in dew tyme they will favour the ryght. Next, to renew and confirm your acquaintance with the Lieutenant of the Tower. Thirddie, to obtaine as great certainty as you can for the fleete by the means of Lord Thomas Howard's nephew, and of some sea-ports. Fourthly, to secure the hearts of as many noblemen and knychts, as ye can get dealing with, and to resolve what every one of their parts shall be at that great day. Fyftly, to forsee anent armourye for every shire, that, agains that day, my enemies have not the whole commandment of armoure, and my friends only be unarmed. Sextly, that, as ye have written, ye may distribute good seminories through every shire, that may never leave working in the harvest, till the day of reaping come, and generally to leave all things in such ordour and certainty that the enemies will not be able in the mean time to lay such barres in my way as shall make things remediless when the time shall come.'

The ambassadors, as James anticipated, were not successful in drawing from Elizabeth a declaration of his title ; but they procured from her the lesser benefit of 2000*l.* additional to the pension of 5000*l.*, which the King had enjoyed for some years. They also obtained, what was almost as good as Elizabeth's declaration could have been, a promise from many of the chief councillors and nobility of her court, to the effect that they would espouse the claims of their King, and be ready, at the Queen's decease, to assert them. In these negotiations much was owing to the address and zeal of the Earl of Mar ; but perhaps the most favourable circumstance was Essex's recent death, which had occasioned a dislocation of parties, and turned the eyes of most men upon the King of Scots. The Secretary Cecil, a most cautious person, but who had befriended the Scottish monarch some years before against his mother, when attending the English embassy in France, now thought proper to open a secret correspondence with him ; it being better, as he himself said in justification of his conduct, to keep the heir-presumptive quiet with good hopes, than, by neglecting him, to excite him to turbulent measures, which might even touch the life of the reigning monarch. Many other individuals about the same time also began to give James private hints of their favourable disposition to his claims.

An amusing story is told regarding the correspondence which Cecil maintained with the King. Elizabeth one day took an airing in her carriage over the heath in the neighbourhood of Greenwich Palace—Cecil being with her—when a Scottish courier happened to approach ; and, as she had

heard no news from the the North for some considerable time, she requested that the man might be brought to her, to deliver his letters. Cecil, who had every reason to fear that the post-bag would be found to contain some clandestine communications to himself, was thrown into a state of great alarm by the incident; taking the packet, however, with an air of proper alacrity, he called for a knife to rip it up. Ere that could be brought, he pretended to smell the disagreeable effluvia of a nasty leather bag, and suggested that he might take the letters home and give them an airing before presenting them to her Majesty. To this the queen readily consented; for there was nothing she dreaded or detested so much as an offensive smell; and thus Cecil, by a simple effort of presence of mind, evaded an *exposé* which must have proved his destruction, and which he could by scarcely any other means have avoided. Cecil should by no means be blamed for the duplicity which he displayed in these intrigues. Considering the temptations which James had to try force of arms in asserting or anticipating his right, an English minister was justifiable in adopting every measure to keep him quiet. At this very time, not to speak of the recent temptation offered by Essex, his Majesty was solicited by the King of Spain to invade England with an army of that nation; and by the Pope to give up to him the education of Prince Henry, for the sake of securing the attachment and co-operation of the Catholics. In all probability, we owe it to the exertions of Cecil, interested though they were, that the succession was achieved without a civil war, or at least some considerable and sanguinary insurrec-

tion ; so much may the wisdom of one man sometimes do for a nation.

It does equal credit to Cecil and to James, that the latter, with all his natural impatience on this subject, had the cool sense to appreciate the sedative lessons which the other read to him. The minister having assured his Majesty, in a letter, of his sincere zeal in his service, ‘ although he would not, as others had done, needlessly hazard his reputation and fortune before the time ;’ James, in his answer, thanked him for his plain and honest offer, and desired him to be assured that ‘ he could have no pleasure in seeing him hazard his fortune and reputation, since the loss of these would make him of less value to him ;’ adding, ‘ I protest, that, for your constant and honest behaviour in your sovereign’s service, I loved your virtues long before I could be certain that you would deserve at my hand the love of your person : wherefore, go on and serve her truly that reigneth, as you have done ; for he that is false to the present, could never be true to the future.’ * The magnanimity of this declaration is entitled to high praise.

It is a remarkable thing, throughout all Cecil’s correspondence, that he endeavours, by insinuations against most of the other persons who intrigued for James’s favour, to draw his Majesty’s

* Cecil’s correspondence was managed by cipher letters, which were chiefly conveyed by the circuitous route of Ireland. Copies, deciphered by the Earl of Mar, have been preserved in the archives of that family. The above extracts are from the Life of Elizabeth, by Birch, who had seen second copies in the possession of Lord Hardwicke.

whole dependence upon himself. He speaks with peculiar severity of the Earl of Northumberland, a powerful and accomplished nobleman, who had proposed to James to be ready with all his vassals in the northern counties, to join any Scottish force which the King might afterwards find it necessary to bring into England for the vindication of his title. According to Cecil, Northumberland, although professedly thus favourable to the Scottish succession, was secretly adverse to it; and was, moreover, too vain and foolish a man to be trusted in any great undertaking. In proof of this, he relates a dialogue which was said to have taken place between the Earl and his Countess, and which, if true, certainly gives a curious view of the language of the better orders of the people in that age. Northumberland had said to his Countess, that he would rather see King James buried than crowned, and that he and his friends were resolved to lose their lives before they should witness the latter event. The lady—a sister of the late Essex, and therefore favourable to King James—and who, moreover, had no particular regard for her husband—responded to this declaration, that, rather than see any other than the King of Scots reign in England, she would eat the hearts of him and his friends in salt, although she were sure of the gallows immediately after! That Cecil was right in cautioning the King about Northumberland, is evident from a fact mentioned by the satiric Osborn, that his lordship vapoured in all places, and in all companies, about what he should do for the settlement of the succession, avowing that he should bring in King James by the sword. When we know this, we are less at a loss to ac-

count for the disfavour into which Northumberland fell after the King had acceded to his English seat. The truth is, he belonged to a small party of unprincipled and irreligious men, then beginning to be formed in England, who regarded very little besides their own advancement, and endeavoured to make a taste in letters and philosophy atone for the want of all more solid qualifications; the foundation, as it may be called, of that sect of men, who, under the denominations of Infidels, Philosophers, and Utilitarians, have figured more or less in every age from that time to the present. Among the other members of this fraternity, whom Cecil warned King James to beware of, were Lord Cobham and Sir Walter Raleigh: they, to use his own quaint phrase, completed, with Northumberland, 'a triplicity who denied the Trinity,' and were equally dangerous with his Lordship.

It was during the interval between Essex's death and the demise of Elizabeth, that James published his work entitled, 'The Trew Law of Free Monarchies, or the Reciproock and Mutuall Duty betwixt a free King and his Naturall Subjects;' the object of which was, unquestionably, to prove himself to the English nation as fitted to become their ruler. We draw from this work a very clear view of the grounds he had for those notions regarding the extent of the royal prerogative, and the sanctity of the persons of kings, which are at the present day so fruitful a subject of ridicule and invective. The two grand foundations of his errors on these subjects, were his interpretation of the scriptural accounts of the Jewish monarchy, and his habit of arguing in what is called the

manner of the schools. He takes it for granted, for instance, in the very first sentence of the treatise, that monarchy is the best of all possible forms of governments, because it resembles that of Heaven by the Divine Being; a most flagrant instance of the absurdity of scholastic logic, so constantly contenting itself, in moral conclusions, with one external and unimportant resemblance. In the same strain he proceeds to show, that, while kings are to exercise an unlimited control over their subjects, as the anointed lieutenants of the autocratic and unimpeachable Deity, they are to have no reflective power over him, not even the privilege of complaining. They are to obey him at all hazards, as they would wish to escape the Divine wrath itself; and, even if he should become a perfect monster of tyranny, they are to take no measures against him, but leave him to be corrected by his Divine constituent. His theory is, that the errors of the people be corrected by the king, the errors of the king by God; and the only arms he allows the subjects to use, in any case, are *preces et lachrymæ*, time out of mind described as the proper weapons of the church. In his opinion, a bad king must occur rarely, because there are so many reasons why he should be good; but when such a contingency does occur, the subjects are to consider it as a judgment of the Almighty for their sins, and are to kiss the rod. At the very worst, they can console themselves by the reflection, that God, who is the sharpest and sorest of all schoolmasters, will amply avenge their cause in his own good time.

It would be an absurdity, almost equal to any ever committed by this literary monarch himself, to at-

tempt a serious exposure of the utter baselessness and inapplicability of his arguments. But it is equally clear, that he might entertain all these notions, and act upon them in his own practice as a king, without incurring any blame. The truth is, he theorised exactly in the style of the age in which he lived, or rather in which he was educated; a time when there was no argument which could stand, in popular estimation, against a text of scripture; none which could bear up, in the eyes of the philosophical, against a syllogism. It was from these superstitions, and such as these, that the greater part of the miseries of the seventeenth century took their origin; and, strange as it may appear, the contest which had subsisted for so many years betwixt James and the Scottish church, depended solely from two contending texts, by one of which the King thought himself irresponsible to his people; while the clergy were persuaded by the other, that they ought to be exempted from the control of a civil magistracy. Was there any greater absurdity in the idea of a king, invested with an absolute power over the minds and persons of his subjects, than in that of a large body of professional men being exempted from every kind of control, and paying no obedience to the state under which they worked for their subsistence, and by which they were protected? These were the errors of a time when intellectual light was imperfect—the efforts of men to see the sun of knowledge through the mists amidst which it was rising. But perhaps the best apology for James, in regard to his notions of government, is, that even, at the present time, it is a science about which great doubts prevail among the wisest, and which, in

the most advanced of all countries, has yet scarcely passed its infancy. There can be no doubt that a time will arrive when this, like other sciences, will be understood with a degree of exactness such as to preclude all possibility of discussion, and when men will look back upon the agitations which the subject occasions in the present age, with a pity and wonder greater than what we bestow upon the theories of King James.

If any man entertains a grudge against this monarch for the high notions of the kingly office upon which he acted in his own reign, and by which he is supposed to have occasioned the ruin of his son, he would be completely mollified by a perusal of the treatise which has occasioned these remarks. It is there apparent that, if pretension to arbitrary rule was inspired in the royal author by any other thing than an idea of its consonance with scripture, it was by the purest feelings of benevolence in regard to his people. The pamphlet breathes throughout a strain of the kindest sentiment: it contains scarcely a single harsh word from beginning to end. The very reason which he assigns for the publication in the first paragraph, is one of pure, though perhaps mistaken kindness, namely, that, by being made better acquainted with their duty to their sovereign, the subjects may avoid those rebellions by which the country had been rendered miserable almost ever since the Reformation; despotism being thus, by a strange error, though one quite natural on his part, assigned as a cure for disorders which had been occasioned in a great measure by itself. Throughout the whole tract, he talks rather with the benignant confidential tone of a father lecturing his children,

than that of a king giving orders to his people. 'The naturall zeale,' says he, 'that I beare to this my native country, with the great pittie I have to see the so-long disturbance thereof, for lacke of the trew knowledge of [the law of free monarchies], hath compelled me at last to breake silence, to discharge my conscience to you, my deare countrymen, herein, that, knowing the ground from whence these your many endless troubles have proceeded, as well as ye have already tasted the bitter fruits thereof, ye may [hereafter] escape and divert the lamentable effects that ever necessarily follow thereon.' Further, he proceeds in a strain of still purer and more touching philanthropy: 'By the law of Nature, the king becomes a natural father to all his lieges at his coronation: And as the father, of his fatherly duty, is bound to care for the nourishing, education, and virtuous government of his children, even so is the king bound to care for all his subjects. As all the toile and paine that a father can take for his children, will be thought light and well bestowed by him, so that the effect thereof redound to their profite and weale; so ought the prince to do towards his people. As the kindly father ought to foresee all inconvenients and dangers that may arise towards his children, and though with the hazard of his own person presse to prevent the same; so ought the king towards his people. As the father's wrath and correction upon any of his children that offendeth, ought to be by a fatherly chastisement seasoned with pity, as long as there is any hope of amendment in them; so ought the king towards any of his lieges that offend in that measure. And, shortly, as the father's chief joy ought to be in

procuring his children's welfare, rejoicing at their weal, sorrowing and pitying at their evil, to hazard for their safety, travel for their rest, wake for their sleepe; and, in a word, to think that his earthly felicity and life standeth and liveth more in them than in himself; so ought a good king think of his people.'

Surely it is impossible to read this most amiable, most candid, and most earnest piece of self-portraiture, without being convinced that James's errors as a king must have proceeded from his head, and not his heart.

One of the most remarkable things about this little book is, that, although written by the author for the purpose of recommending himself to the English people as their King, it makes no attempt to gain upon them by appeals to their prejudices, or by insidious promises of popular government. It did not suit with the upright candour of the Stuarts, regarding as they ever did their far-descended right, to offer cheaper or easier forms of government, to haggle with their people for degrees of rule, to attempt to undersell former sovereigns; *that* was left for another dynasty to do. James looks back upon his early ancestors, who conquered the land, and divided it among the companions of their swords; and he asserts, what is true in feudal law, that it is by his good will, as representing the first givers, that the present possessors enjoy their estates. 'As the Kings,' says he, 'were in Scotland before any estates or ranks of men within the same, and before any parliaments were holden and laws made; and as by them was the land distributed, (which at first was wholly theirs), states erected and decerned, and

forms of government devised and established—so it follows of necessity that the Kings were the *authors* and *makers* of the laws, and not the laws of the Kings. To prove which assertion more clearly, it is evident by the rolls of our chancellery, (which contains our oldest and fundamental laws), that the King is *dominus omnium bonorum*, and *dominus directus totius domini*; the whole subjects being but his vassals, and from him holding all their lands as their over-lord, who, according to good services done to him, changeth their holdings from tack to feu, from ward to blanch, erecteth new baronies, and uniteth old, without advice or authority of either parliament, or any other subaltern judicial seat. So as, if wrong might be admitted in play, (albeit, I grant wrong should be wrong in all persons), the King might have a better colour for his pleasure, without further reason, to take the land from his lieges, as over-lord of the whole, then, as foolish writers say, the people might unmake a King, and put another in his room; but either of them, as unlawful, and against the ordinance of God, ought to be alike odious to be thought, much less to be put in practice.'

In this passage, nothing appears to a modern eye so remarkable, as the way in which he speaks of parliaments, seeing that that court is now regarded as more powerful, and far more indispensable, than the King. But, in James's time, parliaments in his own country were scarcely worthy of the name, while in England, from the depression they had suffered under the Tudors, and the éclat which had attended the arbitrary rule of Elizabeth, they occupied, in reality, but a subaltern place in the scale of government. But James

speaks still more plainly of this branch of the legislature :—‘ According,’ says he, ‘ to these fundamental laws, we daily see, that, in the parliament, *which is nothing else but the head court of the King and his vassals*, the laws are but *craved* by his subjects, and only made by him at their ro-gation, and with their advice ; for, albeit the King make daily statutes and ordinances, enjoyning such pains thereto as he thinks meet, without any advice of parliament or estates, yet it lies in the power of no parliament to make any kind of law or statute, without his sceptre be to it, for giving it the force of a law.’ That James, under his present circumstances, should have published such sentiments as these, is certainly very strange. Yet, when we recollect, that the publication of the work in which they appeared had the effect rather of smoothing than of obstructing his way to the English throne, our wonder must in a great measure cease. Such theories must have been then agreeable to the feelings of the great mass of the people. No doubt, many men were then beginning to wish for the exaltation of parliaments ; this was the age immediately before that of Selden. And there had existed for nearly two generations a germ of republicanism in the nations of Britain. But all such theories were as yet clandestine and obscure. And it only belonged to the King, when the different orders of men were peeping into the cabinets of antiquity in search of their primitive rights, to brush the dust, and untie the cord, from his time-dyed charters, and publish them to the world. The people were as yet unprivileged to commit theirs to the press ; although the very next age saw

them hold up the precious parchment on the points of their swords.

It did not escape the acute eye of Elizabeth, that, after the death of Essex, her courtiers turned their faces more and more decidedly from the 'bright occidental star,' under which she was figured, to fix their gaze and their worship upon the 'rising sun,' which was the corresponding epithet bestowed upon her cousin of the North. The loss of health, which began about this time to be perceptible upon her, and which was perhaps partly the cause, and partly the effect of their ingratitude; the anguish which she endured in regret for her unhappy favourite; the sense of mortification which accrued to her, from observing how little she was loved by any but the merest common people for her own sake: all conspired to throw a gloom over the latter days of this illustrious princess; and she, who had saved the inestimable benefits of the Protestant faith for her race, who had rendered her own country glorious, and increased the happiness of others, who had set the world an example of moral dignity, such as it could scarcely ever forget, was destined, in her decline, to experience the want of one true friend, and to exemplify the uselessness of all external glory in securing happiness, if unaccompanied by the blessings of the natural affections.

Among the many causes assigned for the decay of her health and strength, there can be no doubt that the death of Essex was the chief. Like the granite, which resists violent compulsion, but trembles to the touch of a finger, the stupendous mind of Elizabeth, after withstanding, for half a century, the most dreadful political tempests, was

moved from its solid foundations by the gentle pressure of love. She had been enabled, by the pride of womanly and of regal resentment, to sacrifice the man whom she loved on the block ; but when she did so, she was blind to the state of her own heart. After he had expiated all that she could blame him for by his death, she was again free to love him, and passion returned in full tide, to occupy the space which resentment had for a moment filled. Besides all the pain arising from this source, she had the mortification of seeing, that the people did not love her so much since she had sacrificed Essex, their own as well as her favourite ; and also the vexation of finding that her court was much more incontrollable since his death, as well as more bent on paying homage to her successor.

Elizabeth was one of those persons who never take medicine, and who can scarcely ever, upon any account, be brought to allow that they are unwell. She had all her life been remarkable for her frequent appearances in public, and for the near approach which she permitted the mob to make to her person. This was solely to convince her subjects that she was in good health. For the same reason, she always dressed as well as possible, and took every expedient for making herself be thought young. To people who, in the present day, see the ages of all the sovereigns of Europe in common Almanacks, it may appear strange that any uncertainty could have ever prevailed regarding Elizabeth's age. Yet it is true that she was able to keep up a kind of mystery on this subject. Paulus Heutznerus, a German civilian, in 1598, who has left a very minute account of her appearance, men-

tions, that she is *rumoured* to be about sixty-five years of age. She had been particularly careful all along to impress the King of Scots with an opinion of her high health and stout frame of body. A messenger of his told Osborn, a contemporary writer, that, whenever he was brought into her palace with letters from his Master, he was taken into a place, from which he could see, through a half-withdrawn curtain, her Majesty dancing among her maids to a little fiddle. It would even appear that she was willing to deceive herself on this subject ; for not only did she accept of the extravagant flatteries of her courtiers, which her good sense must have enabled her to penetrate, but she had the miserable weakness to banish every thing in the shape of a mirror from her chambers for several years before she died, lest she should by any chance become aware of the changes which time had wrought upon her person. *

One of the obscure memoir-writers, whose works are so much drawn upon in this composition, relates a story of Elizabeth, which, though minute, and apparently trifling, is nevertheless of some account in the history of her decline. She one day happened, by some chance, to cast her eyes upon one of the articles which she had ordered to be excluded from her chambers, and, being in some degree fascinated by the sight, she could not resist the inclina-

* Her Majesty at this time condescended to use paint ; and it is reported in Sir Robert Sibbald's account of the conversations of Jonson and Drummond, that her waiting-maids occasionally amused themselves by applying to the royal nose, the carmine which should have been laid upon her cheeks—being certain that she would not detect the trick.

tion she felt to inspect the image of her face. Bitter, however, was the regret she afterwards felt for indulging this curiosity. Her visage was now so lean and wrinkled, so wan and unlovely, that, after gazing at it for a little in a sort of stupefaction, she burst away in an agony of humbled and mortified feeling, exclaiming against the deceitful and interested compliments with which she was daily regaled, and conscious that, since she could no longer put trust in those, she could never again be happy.

The state of her health was such in January, 1603, that she was obliged to retire to Richmond. At this time, the ring which had been put upon her finger at her coronation, and which had never since been taken off, was grown into the flesh in such a way, that she was compelled, much against her will, to have it filed off; a circumstance regarded by her people, and perhaps also by herself, as a bad omen. The almonds of her jaws now began to swell, and she gradually lost her appetite. As disease increased upon her, she seemed to give herself more and more up to melancholy thoughts, and her courtiers of course became less and less assiduous in their attentions. Some time in the month of February, there occurred an incident which did much to accelerate her doom.

Some years before, when Essex was in the height of favour, he one day complained, that the efforts of his enemies to injure him in her estimation were incessant, and that he feared he should at some period fall a sacrifice to them. To assure him against such an event, she bestowed upon him a ring, which, she said, he should only have to send to her, in order to procure her pardon for any offence he might be accused of. When he was con-

demned to death, she naturally expected that he would have transmitted this token, and reminded her of her promise. But no token came; and it appears that one of the principal causes of her giving consent to his death, was an idea she entertained, that he scorned her too much to entreat for her forgiveness. Essex, however, had in reality attempted to procure pardon by means of the ring. Observing a boy playing under the window of his prison, he threw out the precious trinket, and desired him to carry it to Lady Scroope, with a request from the Earl of Essex, that she would convey it to the Queen. The boy unfortunately delivered the ring, along with the message, to the Countess of Nottingham, with whom Lady Scroope lived; and that lady was prevailed upon, either by her husband, or by Sir Robert Cecil—it is uncertain which—to suppress it. As her ladyship attended upon the Queen, and heard her daily mention the name of Essex with regret, she had abundant opportunities of repenting an action which had so evidently been fatal to her mistress. Soon after, being herself seized with a mortal disease, she thought it necessary for the peace of her mind to send for the Queen, and make disclosure of what she had done; after which she asked if her Majesty would forgive her. “God,” said the agitated Queen, “may forgive you, but I never can;” and in the extremity of her emotion, she shook the dying lady in her bed, and left her with maledictions which she could not restrain herself from uttering. The wrath of a mind like Elizabeth’s has always something in it more terrible than that of common minds, as the motion of a

large vessel in a stormy sea, is a more impressive and agitating sight than that of a boat or pinnace.

‘ After this, a kind of benumbness seized her, with a deep melancholy ; so she would sit silently, refrain from meat, and admit of no conference, except with the Bishop of Canterbury.’* In consequence, perhaps, of some vow, or inward resolution, she would not go to bed, but sat or lay upon cushions, which were arranged on the floor of one of her inner chambers. Her most common posture was to sit, with her eyes dejected upon the ground, and her finger placed listlessly in her mouth. Her kinsman, Sir Robert Carey, has left in his Memoirs the following striking picture of her utter desolation of mind.

‘ When I came to court, I found the Queen ill-disposed, and she kept her inner lodging ; yet she, hearing of my arrival, sent for me. I found her in one of her withdrawing-chambers, sitting low upon her cushions. She called me to her : I kissed her hand, and told her it was my chiefest happiness to see her in safety and in health, which I wished might long continue. She took me by the hand, and wrung it hard, and said, “ No, Robin, I am not well,” and then discoursed with me of her indisposition, and that her heart had been sad and heavy for ten or twelve days ; and in discourse, she fetched not so few as forty or fifty great sighs. I was grieved at first to see her in this plight ; *for, in all my lifetime before, I never knew her fetch a sigh, but when the Queen of Scots was beheaded.*’

Sir Robert Cecil and other councillors now

* Baker's Chronicle.

thought it proper to ask the Queen who she should wish to be her successor. To this question, which she had forborne to answer all her life, she is said to have at last replied, that she would not have her kingdom to fall into the hands of *rascals*—such was the word she used in allusion to the remote pretenders—her throne had been a throne of kings, and she would have one of that rank to succeed her. They of course understood that she meant the King of Scots. James, before this, had given a sapphire ring to her attendant Lady Scroope, to be sent to him by the quickest possible means, the moment she should expire.

For a long time before this, there was scarcely a single officer about Elizabeth's court, of what rank soever, who had not made application for favour, either to King James in person, or to some of his favourites and attendants. Among others who took this precaution, was her kinsman Sir Robert Carey, whose account of her appearance at her last illness has just been quoted. This gentleman was previously acquainted with King James, having been first at his court in the train of Secretary Walsingham, and afterward on his own account, as the apologist of Mary's execution. According to his self-written memoirs, which form an exceedingly curious volume, 'hearing that neither the physicians, nor none about the Queen, could persuade her to take any course for her safety, and fearing her death would soon ensue, I could not but think in what a wretched state I should be left, most of my livelihood depending upon her life. And, hereupon, I bethought myself with what grace and favour I was ever received by the King of Scots, whensoever I was sent to him. I did

assure myself, it was neither unjust nor dishonest for me to do for myself, if God at that time should call her to his mercy. Thereupon, I wrote to the King of Scots, desiring him not to stir from Edinburgh; and if of that sickness she should die, I would be the first man to bring him news of it.' Good Sir Robert was one of those philanthropists, who, entertaining a warm and unfailing friendship for themselves, are not to be deterred from exemplifying it by the hazard of offending a little against delicacy or moral feeling.

'On Wednesday the 23d of March,' continues this writer, 'she grew speechless. That afternoon, by signs, she called for her council, and putting her hand to her head when the King of Scots was named to succeed her, they all knew he was the man she desired should reign after her.* About six at night, she made signs for the Archbishop and her chaplains to come to her; at which time I went in with them, and sat upon my knees, full of tears to see that heavy sight. Her Majesty lay upon her back, with one hand in the bed, and the other without; [for she had now been forced into

* Some doubts have been bandied about by different writers, as to the interpretation of this sign. The fact simply was—the Council desired her to put her hand to her head, if she wished the King to succeed her; and she did so. But whether this was her will or not, was surely of little importance. James's right was unquestionable; and surely, after her death, the law of the 13th of her reign, declaring it treason to deny that she could determine the succession with advice of Parliament, was null and void. The truth is, James's succession was less in violation of existing laws than her own had been, and in the opinion of many, his right was preferable to her own from the beginning, on account of the circumstances of her mother's marriage.

bed]. The Bishop kneeled down by her, and examined her first of her faith; and she so punctually answered all his several questions, by lifting up her eyes, and holding up her hands, as it was a comfort to all the beholders. Then the good man told her plainly what she was come to; and though she had been a great queen here upon earth, yet shortly she was to yield an account of her stewardship to the King of kings. After this he began to pray, and all that were by to answer him. After he had continued long in prayer, till the old man's knees were weary, he blessed her, and meant to rise and leave her. The Queen made a sign with her hand. My sister Scroope, knowing her meaning, told the Bishop, the Queen desired he would pray still. He did so for a long half-hour after, and then thought to leave her. The second time she made a sign to have him continue in prayer. He did so for half an hour more, with earnest cries to God for her soul's health, which he uttered with that fervency of spirit, as the Queen to all our sight much rejoiced thereat, and gave testimony to us all of her Christian and comfortable end. By this time it grew late, and every one departed, all but the women that attended her.

‘ I went to my lodging, and left word with one in the cofferer's chamber to call me, if that night it was thought she would die, and gave the porter an angel to let me in at any time when I called. Between one and two of the clock on Thursday morning, he that I left in the cofferer's chamber brought me word the Queen was dead. I rose, and made all haste to the gate to get in. There I was answered I could not enter; the Lords of the

Council having been with him, and commanded that none should go in or out, but by warrant from them. At the very instant one of the Council, the Comptroller, asked whether I was at the gate. I said yes. He said to me, if I pleased he would let me in. I desired to know how the Queen did. He answered, pretty well. I bade him good night. He replied, and said, Sir, if you will come in, I will give you my word and credit you shall go out again at your pleasure. Upon his word, I entered the gate, and came up to the cofferer's chamber, where I found all the ladies weeping bitterly. He led me from thence to the Priory Chamber, where all the Council was assembled: there I was caught hold, and assured I should not go for Scotland, till their pleasures were farther known. I told them I came of purpose to that end. From thence they all went to the Secretary's chamber; and as they went, they gave a special command to the porters that none should go out of the gates, but such servants as they should send to prepare their coaches and horses for London. There was I left in the midst of the court to think my own thoughts, till they had done council. I went to my brother's * chamber, who was in bed, having been overwatched many nights before. I got him up with all speed; and when the council's man was going out of the gate, my brother thrust to the gate. The porter, knowing him to be a great officer, let him out. I pressed after him, and was stayed by the porter. My brother said angrily to the porter, Let him

* George, Lord Hunsdon.

out ; I will answer for him. Whereupon I was suffered to pass, which I was not a little glad of.'

Carey was now free to set out for Scotland, on his own account, without waiting for the permission of the Council. But, having been encouraged by that body to hope that he should be made their official messenger, he determined to linger at London till their pleasure should be known. As he was saddling his horse outside the gate, his sister, Lady Scroope, who had not before had an opportunity of delivering to him the sapphire ring which King James had placed in her hands, threw it to him over a window, and thus furnished him with a credential which might authenticate his intelligence, without the seal of the Council. He then rode to London, and, putting up at the Knight Marshal's lodging, near Charing Cross, waited till the Lords came to Whitehall garden.

' I stayed there till it was nine o'clock in the morning, and hearing that all the Lords were in the Old Orchard, at Whitehall, I sent the Marshall to tell them that I had stayed all that while to know their pleasures ; and would attend them, if they would command me any service. They were very glad when they heard I was not gone, and desired the Marshall to send for me, and I should with all speed be dispatched for Scotland. The Marshall believed them, and sent Sir Arthur Savage for me. I made haste to them. One of the council, my Lord of Banbury that now is, whispered the Marshall in the ear, and told him, if I came they would stay me, and send some other in my stead. The Marshall got from them, and met me coming to them between the two

gates. He bade me begone, for he had learnt for certain that if I came to them they would betray me.

‘ I returned, and took horse between nine and ten o’clock, and that night rode to Doncaster.* The Friday night, I came to my own house at Witherington, and presently took order with my deputies to see the Borders kept in quiet, which they had much to do; and gave order the next morning the King of Scotland should be proclaimed King of England, and at Morpeth and Alnwick. Very early on Saturday, I took horse for Edinburgh, and came to Norham about twelve at noon, so that I might well have been with the King at supper time; but I got a great fall by the way, and my horse with one of his heels gave me a great blow on the head, that made me shed much blood. It made me so weak, that I was forced to ride a soft pace after; so that the King was newly gone to bed by the time I knocked at the gate. I was quickly let in, and carried up to the King’s chamber. I kneeled by him, and saluted him by his title of England, Scotland, France and Ireland. He gave me his hand to kiss, and bade me welcome. After he had long discoursed of the manner of the Queen’s sickness and of her death, he asked what letters I had from the council? I told him, none; and acquainted him how narrowly I had escaped from them. And yet I had brought him a blue ring from a fair lady, that I hoped would give him assurance of the truth that I had reported. He took it, and looked upon it, and said, ‘ It is enough: I know by this you are a

* 155 miles from London.

true messenger.' Then he committed me to the charge of my lord Hume, and gave streight commands that I should want nothing. He sent for his chirurgeons to attend me ; and, when I kissed his hand at my departure, he said to me these gracious words ; ' I know you have lost a near kinswoman and a mistress ; but here take my hand, I will be as good a master to you, and will requite this service with honour and reward.'

' So I left him that night, and went with my lord Hume to my lodging, where I had all things fitting for so weary a man as I was. After my head was drest, I took my leave of my lord and many others that attended me, and went to my rest.

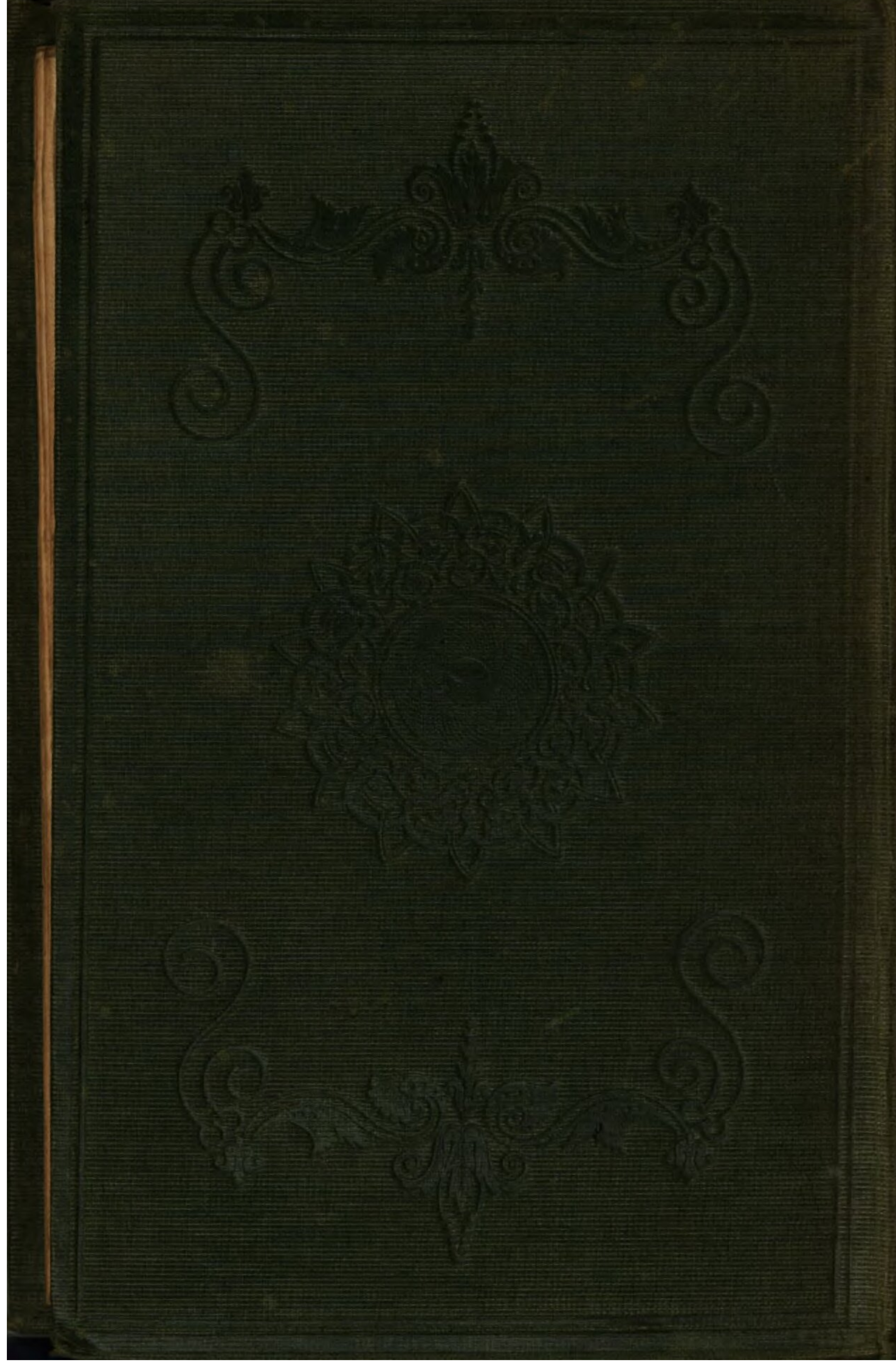
' The next morning by ten o'clock, my lord Hume was sent to me by the King, to know how I had rested ; and, withal, said, that his Majesty had commanded him to know of me what it was that I desired most that he should do for me ; bade me ask, and it should be granted. I desired my lord to say to his Majesty from me, that I had no reason to importune him for any suit, for that I had not as yet done him any service ; but my humble request to his Majesty was to admit me a gentleman of his bed-chamber ; and hereafter I knew if his Majesty saw me worthy, I should not want to taste of his bounty. My lord returned this answer, that he sent me word back, with all his heart I should have my request.' And the next time I came to court, which was some four days after, I was called at night into his bed-chamber, and there by my Lord of Richmond [the Duke of Lennox,] in his presence I was sworn one of the gentlemen of his bed-chamber, and presently I helped to take off his clothes, and

staid till he was in bed. After this there came daily noblemen and gentlemen from our court, and the King set down a fixed day for his departure towards London.'

It will be observed from this minute narrative, that James received the news which told him of his long expected increase of kingdoms, without betraying any symptoms of that extravagant joy which might have been expected from his character. Perhaps, something is concealed by Carey. It is said by Osborn, that the messenger being unable 'to satisfy such a concourse of *doubts* and *questions*, as far more resolute natures than his do usually muster up on lesse occasions, the King stood in a maze, being more affected through the *fear of opposition*, than pleased with the present report; till, by a lamer poet, he was advertised of his being joyfully proclaimed in London, and of the unquestioned reception his title in all places met with. The truth seems to be, that James did not place entire reliance upon Carey's news, or at least was uncertain of the invitation of the English council, and therefore did not chuse to commit himself by expressing any particular feeling on the occasion. It was not till next morning, (Sunday, March 27,) when two official messengers arrived from the Council, informing him of his proclamation in London, and conveying the homage of the leading men in the kingdom, that he felt fully assured; and he it remarked, it was only then that he made a distinct offer of reward to Carey for his service. The two persons selected by the council to convey their allegiance to James were Sir Charles Percy, brother of the Earl of Northumberland, and Mr Thomas Somerset, son

of the Earl of Worcester. The letter which they brought contained a resentful allusion to the conduct of Sir Robert Carey; which it must be allowed, was not that of a gentleman, but rather the act of an unprincipled and uncaring adventurer; and such, it appears, was the general opinion at the time.

END OF VOLUME FIRST.



Chambers, Robert

The life of King James the first in two volumes

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